



Office of Global Education

# SUMMER 2024

## Study Abroad

## Handbook

[www.bc.edu/global-ed](http://www.bc.edu/global-ed) [summerabroad@bc.edu](mailto:summerabroad@bc.edu)



#BCsummerabroad  
#BCabroad



BOSTON  
COLLEGE





Dear Summer Study Abroad Participant,

Congratulations on your study abroad plans for the upcoming summer. I hope that your international experience will contribute to your development as a person, a scholar, and a global citizen.

We have compiled this handbook to provide you with information you will need to prepare for your experience abroad. While you will also receive information directly from your professor or on-site coordinator, please review this handbook and share the information with your parents or guardians. We have drawn upon our expertise to provide information on everything from visas, health and safety, packing, and cultural preparation.

Keep in mind that the transition into your new setting may not be seamless. If you encounter any difficulties, please, let us know. OGE and Boston College are always available to help.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Larry Pickener".

Larry Pickener  
Director, Office of Global Education

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# PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

## TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

- ☐ Apply for a passport and visa if needed
- ☐ Make travel arrangements
- ☐ Plan your finances
- ☐ Arrange medical and dental checkups
- ☐ Obtain necessary vaccinations and prescriptions
- ☐ Register online with CISI medical insurance
- ☐ Add the CISI and Alert Traveler App to phone
- ☐ Make a packing list
- ☐ Conduct pre-departure research

## AT BOSTON COLLEGE

- ☐ Attend summer orientation session
- ☐ Complete Google Form with travel information

## ON-SITE SAFETY PLANNING

- ☐ Read health, safety, and travel recommendations for your destination
- ☐ Make copies of all important documents (leave one set at home) Share your travel itinerary and contact information with family members

# TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

### PASSPORT AND VISA

To study abroad, your passport must be valid for at least six months after your US return date. Visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for passport and visa information. If your host country requires a visa, your OGE advisor will provide you with further details on the application process. Non-US citizens will be responsible for checking with their respective consulates about passport renewal and visa procedures. Students are responsible for being in full compliance with all host country regulations. Keep copies of all application documents you submit.

If you travel through other countries en route to your final destination, even if you just switch planes, you may also need a transit visa. Verify this before departure.

### TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

You are responsible for your own travel arrangements. If you arrive before the start of your program, book accommodations for that time. Youth hostels are a less expensive alternative to hotels. Have an alternative way to secure/lock your belongings, as hostels may not have lockers available. Most rail and airline passes must be purchased in the US before departure. Read all guidelines and restrictions before purchasing airline tickets and passes.

### HELPFUL WEBSITES:

[www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)

<https://www.google.com/travel/flights>

[www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com)

<https://www.hostelworld.com/>

<https://hihostels.com/>

# TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

## FINANCES

- In most countries you can use credit, ATM, and debit cards. Your ATM card must have access to international networks (e.g., Cirrus, Plus). If you have a PIN with letters, know the corresponding numbers. Some vendors and ATMs require a special 'chip' card for transactions, making it impossible to use your card in some situations. However, most US banks have switched to chip cards; if you do not yet have one you should check with your bank. Keep backup currency on hand. Check your bank's overseas fees before leaving. Get a credit card PIN for possible cash advances.
- Some US banks have international partners that charge no ATM fees or have reduced fees. Check with your bank about international partners.
- Take a picture of your credit cards, front and back and make sure that it is saved to the cloud. That way you can access the phone number to call if something happens to your card and you have your card number.
- Notify your ATM, credit, and debit card banks before departure. Otherwise, they may think your cards were stolen once you use them abroad. If this happens they may freeze your account and you will need to contact them from abroad to reactivate it.
- Evaluate your programs' [estimated cost sheet](#). Prepare a budget. Bring about \$150- \$200 with you in local currency for arrival. You may have difficulties withdrawing or exchanging money at the airport and will want to make sure that you have enough for the first day. The recommended amount you will need varies by location.

## MEDICAL INSURANCE

- All BC students will also be enrolled in the CISI Worldwide Insurance plan for the duration of their program. You are required to register with CISI medical insurance after receiving your insurance certificate number. For a comprehensive description of the CISI Worldwide Insurance Services, visit the [CISI portal](#). Keep in mind that CISI does not cover you within the US.
- Additionally, a CISI [fee](#) will be placed on your BC bill.
- If you plan to be abroad before or after the CISI coverage dates, you may look into purchasing [additional CISI coverage](#) for leisure travel through their website.
- You must maintain your US-based medical insurance coverage while abroad. Overseas-based insurance plans are insufficient. Utilize a plan through BC's insurance carrier or arrange coverage through another carrier.

## TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

- You will be provided with a CISI membership card. Carry this card at all times. You will need the card if you seek medical treatment abroad.
- In case of a serious illness or injury requiring medical treatment, you should go immediately to the nearest physician or hospital without delay and open a case with CISI's Emergency Assistance Team, AXA Assistance. PHONE: +001 (312) 935-1703 or EMAIL: [medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us](mailto:medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us).

## HEALTH PREPARATIONS

### STUDENTS WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS

- If you have a physical or psychological condition that requires ongoing treatment, it is strongly recommended that you notify OGE and consult your physician or counselor about your plan to go abroad so that they can assist you in attaining arrangements that you may need. Seek their advice about your options and discuss your overseas medical care.
- Consider possible consequences of stress from cultural adjustment and reliance on different medical practices.
- You are strongly encouraged to inform on-site staff about any medical condition for which you may need special assistance. Do this prior to arrival.

### CHECK-UPS AND VACCINATIONS

Have medical and dental exams before departure. Make sure that all of your vaccinations are current. Certain countries may also require or recommend vaccinations against specific diseases before departure.

Carry your CDC Certificate of Vaccination against Covid-19 in case you are asked to show official proof of vaccination and also store a picture of it on your phone..

You can find all the links on [here](#).

Visit the following websites for details:

[www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) (U.S. Department of State)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

# TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

## PRESCRIPTIONS

Bring medications in their original labeled bottles. Take copies of all written prescriptions with generic names. When feasible, bring enough medication for your entire stay abroad. Do not ship medication overseas, as customs may retain it. Visit the [CISI website](#) for information on prescription benefits. Do not pack medication in checked luggage. If you wear contacts, you should also bring an extra pair of contact lenses and solution as you may not be able to find the kind you need abroad.

## OTHER PRECAUTIONS

If you have a serious health condition or allergy, plan to wear a Medic Alert bracelet. It is also strongly recommended that you let on-site staff and travel companions know of your condition in case you have a medical emergency. Bring translations about your condition or allergy in the local language(s) where you will be traveling, so that you can explain in the event of an emergency.

## PRE-DEPARTURE RESEARCH

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVERYONE

- Research your host country starting with the [U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories](#) and using the internet, travel books, newspapers, magazines, and international news programs. Students should also read their OGE Program Fact Sheet.
- Talk with study abroad alumni, OGE staff, BC faculty, and international or exchange students who have studied or lived abroad.
- Be informed and capable of discussing US history and current events occurring in both the US and your host country while abroad.

### HEALTH/SAFETY

- [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) (US Department of State)
- [www.culturalinsurance.com](http://www.culturalinsurance.com) (CISI portal)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [studyabroad.state.gov](http://studyabroad.state.gov) (US Department of State)
- [Alert Traveler](#) (County and City Travel Safety Information)



# TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

## COUNTRIES/CULTURES

- [www.onlinenewspapers.com](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com) (international newspapers)
- [www.countrywatch.com](http://www.countrywatch.com)
- [www.worldatlas.com](http://www.worldatlas.com)

## RECOMMENDED GUIDES

- [Rough Guides series](http://www.roughguides.com/) (www.roughguides.com/)
- [Let's Go series](http://www.letsgo.com/) (www.letsgo.com/)
- [Lonely Planet series](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/) (www.lonelyplanet.com/)
- [Frommer's series](http://www.frommers.com/) (www.frommers.com/)
- Culture Shock series
- Eyewitness Travel guides
- Maximizing Study Abroad: A Student's Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use (R. Michael Paige et al., 2002)

## DIVERSITY ABROAD

Attitudes toward women, the LGBTQ+ community, students with various levels of ability, and AHANA students vary worldwide. Customs, beliefs, laws, facilities, and social practices relating to these populations may be different than in the US. Some countries are very progressive, while others are far more conservative. To prepare for the cultural differences you may encounter, it is recommended that you:

- Review the [resources on the OGE website](#).
- Research your host country. Many student travel guides have sections pertaining to special interest groups. Speak with people who have traveled or lived in your host country.
- Be sensitive to cultural differences. Remember that you will be subject to your host country's laws, even if you feel they are discriminatory.
- Meet with your OGE advisor if you have any concerns. All matters will be kept confidential.

# TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

## COMMUNICATION

You should have access to a cell phone while abroad and the number should be shared with your faculty leader and on-site coordinator.

- Your US cell phone can work abroad if it is a world/tri-band phone. You must unlock it to use a local SIM card. Contact your provider to see what might be possible.
- Rates are high for using a US plan abroad, though many providers offer temporary international plans, which are worth looking into in advance of your departure. If it is not feasible to use your US cell phone abroad, consider buying a cell phone/plan in your host country.
- You can bring a US phone card or use local calling cards. Check with the provider about rates and how to make calls.
- Consider using Whatsapp or Viber for international calls. You can zoom with friends and family but remember the time difference. You can download Whatsapp before departure and text/call friends or family for free. Your friends and family will need to download Whatsapp as well.
- Ask returnees or locals for advice. Some methods work better than others.
- Boston College will communicate with you via your BC email account. It is essential that you read all correspondence and respond in a timely manner as necessary.
- You will need to set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection while abroad, particularly in areas that restrict internet access. When using your computer in public places (cafe, hotel, etc.), connect to VPN before accessing sites that require any personal information. Visit EagleVPN and [www.bc.edu/vpn](http://www.bc.edu/vpn) for details.
- BC 2-Step Verification is required to access Eagle VPN. We recommend that students set up Eagle VPN & BC 2-Step Verification by getting the Duo Mobile app prior to leaving the U.S
- For software and other technology questions, you can also contact the BC Help Center at [help.center@bc.edu](mailto:help.center@bc.edu) or +1(617)552-4357.

# AT BOSTON COLLEGE

## STUDY ABROAD WITHDRAWAL POLICY

You must continue to meet BC's academic, disciplinary, and financial requirements until departure or risk losing final clearance to go abroad. You are responsible for all financial losses if you are not cleared to go abroad.

By turning in the Final Confirmation and Clearance forms online, a student commits to participate in a summer program abroad and is subject to a \$300 non-refundable program deposit, to be charged to the student's Agora account. The OGE will reserve a spot in the program and make any necessary payments on behalf of the student. Any withdrawal after the submission of Final Confirmation and Clearance Forms will result in a financial penalty of at least \$300, according to the fee schedule outlined below.

To withdraw from a program after turning in confirmation forms, a student must complete a withdrawal form and return it to the Summer & Internships Advisor. Depending on the date of withdrawal, the following fees will apply, to be charged to the students' Agora account in May.

### WITHDRAWAL FEE TIMELINE FOR SUMMER PROGRAMS (EXCLUDING INTERNSHIPS)

February 27	\$300 program deposit
March 25	\$300 program deposit + 15% of the program fee
April 10	\$300 program deposit + 30% of the program fee
April 20	\$300 program deposit + 60% of the program fee
May 1	100% of the program fee

### WITHDRAWAL FEE TIMELINE FOR SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

February 27	\$500 program deposit
March 25	\$500 program deposit + 50% of the program fee
April 20	100% of the program fee

# AT BOSTON COLLEGE

## FINANCES

Students will be billed for summer programs via their Agora account in early May, and payment is due prior to departure. Any questions related to billing should be directed to Student Services. For information on billing for non-BC students, please visit the [Non BC Summer Applicants](#) section on the OGE website.

Four separate costs are billed to Agora:

- **Tuition** (consistent with BC summer tuition cost for a 3 credit course)
- **CISI international health insurance** (\$40-\$100 depending on duration of stay)
- **Program fee** (varies depending on location and included amenities, but all program fees include housing, group activities, and some group meals)
- **Enrollment fee** (\$45, a fee set by the university)

**\*\* Note: \*BC Summer Internship Tuition Costs** - A student's first summer internship credit is non-tuition bearing. Students choosing to earn credit for a second or third summer internship experience will be charged by the credit hour during the summer of the internship. The cost for one credit for summer 2023 is \$1018.

Students are responsible for coordinating and paying for their own travel to the program location and budgeting for meals and personal expenses not covered by the program fee. Details on individual program expenses are listed on the program page found on the OGE website.

## ACADEMICS

Students may take up to two summer courses abroad during their time at BC and have those courses count towards the graduation requirements as well as for major, minor or core requirements. Grades appear on transcripts and are factored into students' GPA as regular BC courses. To receive academic credit for a summer course abroad, you must receive at least a C- for the course.

- You are responsible for following all BC academic regulations while abroad.
- Summer courses have been pre-approved for certain requirements. If you wish to receive credit that has not been pre-approved for the course you are taking, it is your responsibility to obtain that approval. Contact the appropriate department or dean if you have questions about course approval.
- If you are making up for a deficiency then you must obtain a course approval form from your dean's office.

# AFTER ARRIVAL ABROAD

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

- Once abroad, you may face an adjustment period referred to as “culture shock.” The degree of shock depends on factors such as length of study abroad, your flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, degree of difference between your home and host culture, prior experience abroad, and your expectations.
- Culture shock is a normal part of study abroad, even during short-term programs. It shows that you are experiencing the difference between your culture and that of the host country.
- Symptoms of culture shock can include homesickness, depression, feeling lost and out of place, frustration, irritability, and fatigue. If you experience culture shock, remember that you are not alone. Contact program staff or BC if you need further assistance overcoming culture shock. Some suggestions for dealing with culture shock should include:
  - “Plunge” into your host culture and wrestle with the differences.
  - Keep an open mind. We all have preconceived ideas and beliefs that come into question while abroad.
  - Get to know others. Do not isolate yourself.
  - Find a “cultural informant,” such as a local person with whom you can discuss your frustrations and encounters with difference.
  - Learn as much as you can about your host culture.
  - Maintain a support structure with others, particularly those going through the same experience.
  - Take time for reflection by writing in a journal or blogging. Record your impressions of new experiences.
  - For some students, culture shock becomes more serious. If you are concerned by your mental and/or physical status, do not hesitate to seek help. Onsite staff can assist in helping you find medical treatment.

## SAFEGUARDING YOUR DOCUMENTS/VALUABLES

- Keep your passport and visa in a secure place. Carry copies when not traveling. Consider sharing copies with family in the U.S.
- Be careful with bank card numbers, receipts, and PINs. Exercise caution at ATM machines.



## AFTER ARRIVAL ABROAD

- Handbags, backpacks, coats, and back pockets are prone to theft. Watch your belongings, especially on public transport. Be aware of ploys to distract your attention and rob you. Use luggage locks. Always secure your bags.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash or all of your money in one place. Use a money belt or neck pouch when traveling. Do not count money in public.
- Secure your belongings in hotels and hostels. Do not leave valuables lying around. Consider using a public locker if there is no safe place for valuables.
- If mugged, do not struggle with the perpetrator. Your safety is worth more than your belongings.

### OBEYING LOCAL LAWS

- Remember that you are a representative of the US and BC. Learn the local laws and obey them.
- Laws and legal proceedings vary worldwide. You are subject to the laws and legal system of the host country.
- Illegal or unacceptable behavior may result in BC disciplinary sanctions. The OGE and on-site staff can dismiss you from the program if necessary.

### STREET SMARTS

- Be aware of your surroundings. Walk confidently. Stay in populated, well-lit areas. Travel with friends at night.
- Pay attention to the local health, safety, and travel recommendations.
- Avoid checking your map on the street. Go into a café or shop.
- Blend in with the local culture in terms of language, behavior, and dress (for example, do not wear clothing with university logos).
- When crossing streets, remember that in some countries vehicles drive on the left side of the road.
- Do not drive while overseas. Use caution when riding in vehicles; always use a seatbelt where available. Driving behavior and laws vary by location. Abide by local laws.
- Know the local phone system, emergency numbers, and how to say “help”.
- Avoid demonstrations or large political gatherings.
- In some locations, exercise caution with water and dairy products. Avoid raw or undercooked food. Be wary of food available at street vendors.
- Carry your Vaccination Card and CISI insurance card.
- If you need assistance, notify your on-site contact, BC, and/or CISI.
- Utilize and respond to Alert Traveler App in case of emergency.
- Let relatives know your travel plans. Contact them upon arrival.

## AFTER ARRIVAL ABROAD

### “GOLDEN RULES” FOR STUDY ABROAD SUCCESS

- KEEP AN OPEN MIND
- GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE
- GET INVOLVED WITH SOMETHING LOCAL
- REMEMBER THAT THE WORLD KNOWS MORE ABOUT THE U.S. THAN THE U.S. KNOWS ABOUT THE WORLD
- COUNTRIES HAVE DIFFERENT LAWS AND CUSTOMS REGARDING ALCOHOL USE. BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY.
- EXPLORE YOUR HOST CITY AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE
- KEEP A JOURNAL OR BLOG

### WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

#### IN AN EMERGENCY

If you encounter an emergency abroad such as a natural disaster, severe illness or injury, physical or sexual assault, or political disturbance, students should:

- Contact on-site staff immediately
- For medical or security assistance, contact CISI’s 24/7 Emergency Assistance Team, AXA at +001 (312) 935-1703 or via EMAIL: [medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us](mailto:medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us)
- Contact the OGE at +1 617-552-3827 during business hours (Monday-Friday 9 am - 5 pm EST) or the Boston College Police Department (BCPD) if outside of business hours at +1 617-552-4444. BCPD is available 24 hours/day and will contact the appropriate university personnel to assist you.
- Contact your family in the US/abroad

The [Emergency Response Preparedness Guidelines](#) were designed to help students manage and respond to emergency incidents that occur overseas.

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT

Boston College takes all reports of sexual misconduct and discrimination very seriously, regardless of where such incidents occur. Cultural norms may mean that actions are interpreted differently in other countries. Regardless of these norms, you are encouraged to utilize BC

support resources and report any incident of harassment or sexual violence.

The OGE works closely with BC's Title IX Coordinator to ensure survivors receive the privacy and support they need both overseas and upon their return to campus. In the case of an incident of sexual assault, get to a safe place, seek medical care if necessary, and take time to decide how you wish to proceed, i.e. reporting the incident to the local authorities, reaching out to BC, or speaking with someone you trust. Your on-site coordinator and faculty program leader are always available as a resource, and you should not hesitate to contact the OGE directly as needed.

Any student who is a victim of sexual assault is strongly encouraged to utilize the services of the Sexual Assault Network at Boston College, a 24-hour/7-days-a-week private and anonymous resource that is staffed by advocates who are trained to listen, provide options, and support the survivor. Resources are available to you while overseas and when you return to campus. Call +1(617)552-BC11(2211) for assistance.

Students are responsible for managing their health and safety while abroad. While there are some events that can occur beyond anyone's control, travelers can be well-prepared to avoid hazards and respond appropriately to incidents by being informed about their host country, making good decisions, knowing available support resources, and asking for assistance when necessary. Taking the following actions will help to ensure that you are well prepared:

Required / Critical Actions:

- Follow the instructions and download the [Alert Traveler app](#).
- Know how to access your CISI health insurance and keep a copy of the card (you have to log into [myCISI](#) to print your card) with you at all times along with the 24/7 assistance phone number
- Keep the on-site faculty or coordinator's numbers, OGE, BC and your host university emergency numbers with you at all times.
- If there is an emergency, you should immediately contact the on-site faculty member or coordinator. It is their responsibility to make sure that you are safe; you must follow their instructions. If there is not an on-site BC faculty or staff person, you should contact your OGE Advisor at BC and the international office staff of your host university as soon as possible.
- Develop a plan for telephone or e-mail contact with your family, so that in case of emergency you will be able to communicate directly about your safety and well-being. It is your responsibility to be in touch with your parents in the case of an emergency; the OGE will only contact families in the case of a major emergency or crisis (in which students are directly involved or face significant risk or danger).
- If there is an emergency in your host city and/or country, it is likely that

BC OGE Advisors or other OGE staff will contact you, often just to ensure your safety and wellbeing. It is imperative that you respond to any e-mail correspondence from OGE staff as soon as possible, as we must verify that we have accounted for all students.

## THE OGE AND THE EMERGENCIES ABROAD

We care deeply about events that occur throughout the world, including those that may impact our students abroad, international exchange students currently studying at BC, and our extended university community. In the event of an emergency, political crisis, or natural disaster in a city or country in which the OGE currently has a program in session, OGE staff will be in close contact with our on-site colleagues, students, and emergency contacts as necessary. • The OGE monitors a variety of sources on international safety and security on a daily basis, including the [U.S. Department of State \(DOS\) travel advisories](#), [OSAC](#), local media, peer groups, and updates from partner universities and on-site staff around the world. We recommend that students and their parents also stay informed.

The OGE operates programs in countries with an active Department of State Level 3 on a case-by-case basis; if we do have a program in a country with an active Level 3 advisory, students will be informed and asked to sign a waiver prior to confirming their participation. Boston College undergraduate students are typically not permitted to travel to Level 4 countries. Students should also be aware of countries with varying levels of advice that apply to specific locations or areas within a country. Higher-risk areas designated within Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 countries are to be strictly avoided. Conditions in any country may change rapidly and at any time. The [Department of State Travel Advisories](#) also provide clear reasons for assigned levels, using established risk indicators, and offer specific advice to U.S. citizens who choose to travel there, such as Health, Crime, Terrorism, Civil Unrest, Natural Disaster, Time-Limited Event and Other.

Please be sure to thoroughly acquaint yourself with the advisory for the country you plan to study in, as well as any other countries you plan to visit. Note that non-program related travel is only encouraged before or after official program dates and that Boston College does not take responsibility for students who chose to travel independently outside their designated program dates and location.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

AS A STUDY ABROAD STUDENT, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO:

- a. Educate yourself about, and fully integrate yourself into, your host country's culture; fully participate in all the academic and optional events and explore the local community in your free time.
- b. Be an exemplary BC ambassador to your host country and university by taking full responsibility for your personal conduct and academic performance.
- c. Learn about and obey the local laws and customs of your host country and understand their implications for you as an individual.
- d. Maximize your personal safety by taking all reasonable precautions, safeguarding your belongings, and keeping emergency contact information at hand.
- e. Be aware of any existing disabilities, chronic illness, or mental health issues and share that information with your OGE advisor who can help you plan for a safe and healthy experience.
- f. Consider host country culture, attitudes, and laws regarding personal relationships, sexuality, race, religion, gender, etc.
- g. Achieve your own study abroad goals by carefully reading all program materials and responding in a timely manner to communications from the OGE, onsite staff, and program provider.



## OGE CONTACT INFORMATION

LOCATION: Hovey House, 258 Hammond Street  
HOURS OF OPERATION: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm  
TEL: +1.617.552.3827  
FAX: +617.552.0647 • EMAIL: [globaleducation@bc.edu](mailto:globaleducation@bc.edu)

### OGE STAFF

LARRY PICKENER (Director) EMAIL: [pickerner@bc.edu](mailto:pickerner@bc.edu)

CHRISTINA HATZIPETROS (Associate Director of Program Development, & Communication, Program Manager for Asia, Middle East, Southeast Europe; scholarships)  
EMAIL: [christina.dimitrova@bc.edu](mailto:christina.dimitrova@bc.edu)

SHANNON WILLIAMS (Summer & Internships Program Manager)  
EMAIL: [Shannon.williams.4@bc.edu](mailto:Shannon.williams.4@bc.edu)

BRENDAN MCGRATH (Administrative and Fiscal Assistant)  
EMAIL: [Brendan.mcgrath@bc.edu](mailto:Brendan.mcgrath@bc.edu)

ASHELY JUN (Finance and Operations)  
EMAIL: [ashley.jun.1@bc.edu](mailto:ashley.jun.1@bc.edu)

VAUGHN THORNTON (Program & Outreach Specialist)  
EMAIL: [vaughn.thornton@bc.edu](mailto:vaughn.thornton@bc.edu)

BRODIE HENRY (Academic Operations Manager)  
EMAIL: [henrybf@bc.edu](mailto:henrybf@bc.edu)

ELIZABETH RYBA (Exchange Student Manager)  
EMAIL: [rybae@bc.edu](mailto:rybae@bc.edu)

PATRICK O'DONNELL (Program Manager for Latin America and Spain)  
EMAIL: [patrick.odonnell.3@bc.edu](mailto:patrick.odonnell.3@bc.edu)

AUSTEN CARPENTER (Program Manager for Great Britain, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden)  
EMAIL: [carpenau@bc.edu](mailto:carpenau@bc.edu)

Samantha Lee (Program Manager for Australia & New Zealand, Austria, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland)

EMAIL: [samantha.lee@bc.edu](mailto:samantha.lee@bc.edu)