

## KEI ALUMNI HANDBOOK

### Welcome Back!

Everyone at KEI hopes that you had a memorable academic, cultural, and social experience abroad. We also look forward to assisting you in the post-program phase.

Returning home can often be as difficult as going away. You may be experiencing reverse culture shock, wondering about your future, looking for a job to pay unexpected expenses, trying to stay involved with your host culture, or thinking about studying abroad again. The *Alumni Handbook* was prepared to help you deal with the most common post-program issues,

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## **RE-ENTRY SHOCK**

### **Readjusting to life at home...**

Are you feeling different, now that you are home? Do you experience the feeling of unfamiliarity in places that should be familiar; a feeling of discomfort with people who are close to you; or, a feeling of inadequacy when dealing with common situations? If you are shaking your head yes, the most likely cause of these feelings is re-entry shock. Simply put, re-entry shock is feeling like you are almost home.

Re-entry shock, often referred to as reverse culture shock or re-entry transition stress, is the shock of being home after an extended period abroad. Often, re-entry shock can be far worse than the culture shock you experience abroad. When you are abroad, you expect to feel foreign. Coming home, you expect to feel safe and familiar. However, things are not the same. You have grown as a person, your views have changed, and your outlook on life has been reshaped by your experiences. You also find that your family and friends have changed; you missed important events at home and on campus; and others have taken your place in clubs and social groups. Even the political and social climate of your home country may have undergone changes.

When this shock does occur, as it does for most in some form or another, it can make you feel extremely unsettled, isolated, insecure and alone. It can spark an emotional chain of reactions, ranging from disengagement to euphoria to alienation, and gradually, to readjustment. Like culture shock, it has a cycle which must be worked through. Re-entry shock can last mere weeks, or may stretch for months, even years.

The key to minimizing re-entry shock is acknowledging its existence, and realizing that there may be frustrations with readjusting to life in your home country. These frustrations are a normal part of your study abroad experience.

### **Do I have re-entry shock?**

If you answer yes to two or more of the following questions, chances are that you are experiencing reverse culture shock.

- Does it feel as though your friends and family don't understand the importance of your experience abroad?
- Do you feel frustrated when friends and family ask questions about your time overseas, but then seem to lose interest after a few minutes?
- Does everyday life at home seem trivial?
- Do you feel depressed, or want to be alone more than usual?
- Do you feel uncertain, lost or confused?
- Do have negative feelings towards your home country?
- Are you restless?

Every individual deals with these feelings in a different way. Some people want to be left alone and limit interaction to people who also studied abroad. Others will want to tell everyone about their experiences. Some will have a difficult time finding anything positive to say about their home country, while others will simply feel detached. Below are frequently made comments illustrating reverse culture shock.

“Everything at home looks foreign.”

“Americans have too many material possessions.”

“Americans are not concerned with the environment.”

“I miss my new friends.”

“I miss the relaxed lifestyle abroad.”

“I miss the food abroad.”

“My friends and family are not interested in my stories.”

“No one wants to see my pictures.”  
“I have grown a great deal.”  
“I feel like a different person.”  
“My experience seems surreal, as if it never happened.”  
“I have a difficult time adjusting to my campus.”

It is important to remember that these reactions are normal, even expected. You are not alone! And, there are steps you can take to relieve re-entry shock.

### **What are the four stages of re-entry shock?**

**DISENGAGEMENT:** While you are still abroad, you begin to thinking about moving back home and moving away from your overseas experience and friends.

**EUPHORIA:** Upon returning home you may feel overwhelming excitement about reuniting with your family and friends. This excitement is often followed by a sudden realization that they are not particularly interested in your experience abroad.

**ALIENATION:** After the initial euphoria, feelings of alienation, frustration and anger may set in. Students often note that they feel like outsiders in their own country; things just don't seem the same. This leads to irritation with others and impatience with your own inability to adjust quickly. Resentment, loneliness, disorientation and even a sense of helplessness may pervade.

**READJUSTMENT:** Eventually you begin to readjust to home life. During this stage, you will feel more comfortable around others, come to grips with the differences between the home and host cultures, and regain your sense of stability. Life gets back to normal – almost. Your experience abroad will always stay with you, it will influence your actions, your academic development and your social outlook. It will simply become part of your everyday life.

Keep in mind that reverse culture shock is a transition with distinct stages. You may encounter all or none of the feelings described in the four stages of reverse culture shock.

### **What can I do to relieve re-entry shock?**

To start with, be aware of re-entry shock and realize that it is normal. Do not expect things to be the same when you return. Things change, you have changed, people you know have changed, and it will take time to readjust.

- Keep in contact with your new friends. Write emails – its inexpensive and effective. Plan a reunion, or make plans to have your friends visit you.
- Become a KEI Alumni Representative and share your experiences with students on your campus who want to study abroad. These students will be interested in your stories and eager to learn about opportunities abroad. You should also inform your Study Abroad office that you would like to help other students plan their overseas experience.
- Become involved in international education. KEI offers several opportunities for alumni, including Summer Resident Assistant positions at our pre-college program locations abroad and internship positions at our KEI-New York City office.
- Join an international club on campus. If there are no international clubs, start your own. KEI will help you get started by providing advice, putting you in touch with the appropriate administrators and faculty on your campus, and providing initial financing to get you going.

- Get involved with the International Student Services office on your campus. Providing assistance to foreign students who are studying on your campus can be very rewarding. You have been in their shoes and you understand their feelings about living in a foreign country.
- Continue learning about the host country and culture by taking courses in the foreign language, international relations, economics, regional studies, literature and history. Talk to your professors and advisor about conducting a project(s) that extends themes addressed in your experiences abroad.
- Enter the KEI Photo or Story Contest. The Photo/Story Contests provides a creative venue for students to showcase their experiences, and share their adventures with others.
- Submit your stories and experiences to our Study Abroad Update! newsletter. It's a great way to share your stories and educate students interested in study abroad.
- Stay abreast of current events in the host country. Read foreign newspapers, watch news reports, subscribe to online newsletters that focus on the host region. KEI has provided a list of resources in this packet of materials to help you get started.
- Make a record of your experience. If you keep a journal describe your most memorable experiences – good and bad. If you do not keep a journal, create a website. Share your experiences with others through photos and text.

Now that you had a taste of the world, you may want to study or intern abroad again. KEI offers Alumni Scholarships worth \$250 to \$1000 US. Every KEI alumni will receive a scholarship if he/she decides to participate in a KEI-sponsored program. The Alumni Scholarship is guaranteed.

Call us! We want to help, and each of us has been through what you're experiencing. Our staff is dedicated to helping students readjust to life at home. Don't hesitate to call us at (800) 831-5095.

### **What else can I do to decrease reverse culture shock?**

Do not resist adjusting to your home country. Many students think that if they allow themselves to become fully integrated in the "old" lifestyle they will somehow detract from their experience abroad. This is not true. Your experience abroad will always be a part of your life and shape your future growth as a person.

Take a moment to think of how friends and family may perceive you. Keep in mind that you are not the only one who changed as a person. Your family and friends have also grown while you were away.

Put yourself in place of others; those who stayed behind may feel threatened by you or jealous of your experience. They may resent that you had an opportunity that they didn't have, or they passed up a similar opportunity. You may make them feel inadequate or inferior by all you have seen and done.

Unintentionally, your excitement may leave the impression that you are the only one who has an interesting life. Friends and family sometimes feel rejected and unappreciated if you carry on about how wonderful everything was in your life abroad.

You should inform friends and family about reverse culture shock, and how it may influence your relationship with them. Take comfort in the fact that you are not alone. Most students experience some stress readjusting to home life.

### **Where can I find more information about reverse culture shock?**

If you are looking for more information about culture shock and re-entry shock, the following sources are a good start:

- Austin, Clyde, ed. Cross-Cultural Reentry: A Book of Readings. Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University, 1986.
- Bennett, Janet. "Transition Shock: Putting Culture Shock in Perspective." International and Intercultural Communication Abroad IV. (December 1977): 92-93.
- International Studies Handbook. Greencastle, IN: DePauw University Press, revised March 2000.
- Kauffmann, Norman L, Judith N. Martin, Henry D. Weaver with Judy Weaver. Students Abroad: Strangers at Home. Education from a Global Society. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1992.
- Storti, Craig. The Art of Coming Home. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1997

## POST PROGRAM SERVICES

We are committed to serving our alumni and providing the following services on an individual basis:

- resume review
- career advice
- alumni networking

Please do not hesitate to contact your Program Manager for assistance.

## GO AGAIN GRANT

Now that you have lived abroad you may be thinking about going back. Or, perhaps you are looking to expand on your international experience by studying or interning in a different country. To help make your goals a reality, KEI offer the GO AGAIN program. This program guarantees a grant of \$500 to every KEI program alumni who participated in another KEI-sponsored summer, semester, quarter, trimester, academic year and/or faculty-led group program.

### Deadlines

Deadlines for the Go Again Grant are the same as the program application deadlines for the desired term of study, as follows:

|                                 |             |                         |          |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------|
| <b>Fall Semester/Quarter:</b>   | May 10      | <b>Academic Year:</b>   | May 10   |
| <b>Winter Quarter:</b>          | October 10  | <b>Summer Programs:</b> | March 10 |
| <b>Spring Semester/Quarter:</b> | November 10 |                         |          |

### Responsibilities

1. Students must write an essay answering the following 2 questions:
  - How did your experience abroad change you as a person, student and future professional?
  - Why do you want to study and/or intern abroad again?
2. Serve as a mentor to other students on the program.
3. Answer students' questions regarding international education and KEI programs.
4. Direct students to more information on KEI programs, including our website, email and telephone.
5. Permit KEI to post your photo and profile on the KEI website for prospective students to reference.

### Rules & Regulations

- Applicants must be past participants of a KEI program and have no balance on their account.
- Students must meet all KEI deadlines and regulations as specified in the KEI Policies.
- Awards are automatically deducted from the program tuition.
- KEI has the right to change the award and amount at any time.

- KEI reserves the right to change the rules and regulations at any time.
- KEI has the right to cancel the GO Again Program at any time.

## **POST-PROGRAM FORMS**

Now that you returned home, you may be wondering what's next. There are several post-program forms) that must be completed so that KEI can process your transcripts and refund of the security deposit. Post-program forms include:

- Program Evaluation Form
- Security Refund Form
- Transcript Request Form

These forms can be downloaded from the KEI website or emailed to you by your KEI advisor.

## **PROGRAM TRANSCRIPTS**

KEI programs include one official and one unofficial transcript. Transcripts will be sent after all KEI program fees have been paid in full and KEI receives your post-program documents. It may take up to three months to prepare and mail your transcript. Transcripts will not be disbursed if there is a balance on your account.

### **Transcript Preferences**

Your Transcript Request Form includes preference for the following options:

- The institution that will issue your transcript – host institution and/or KEI School of Record.
- The mailing address for the official and unofficial transcripts.

Contact your KEI Program Manager to confirm your transcript preferences. If you did not submitted a Transcript Request Form with your enrollment documents, download the form from our website and return it to KEI with the post-program documents.

### **Additional Transcripts**

Requests for additional transcripts must be made directly to the host institution or KEI's University of Record. Students must follow standard procedures of the transcript issuing institution, including payment of fees, if any. Since institutional procedures and fees for issuing transcripts change, you should contact your KEI Program Manager for the most updated information.

### **Grades & Disputes**

Whenever possible, KEI will email your grades before official transcripts are finalized. If you have questions about your grades please contact the professor(s) of the course. All grade disputes are the sole responsibility of the student. KEI will assist students in contacting the host institution and faculty, but has no authority to change grades with out written consent of the host institution. All grade disputes should be resolved before official transcripts are issued to avoid additional mail and transcript charges.

### **Credit Transfer**

Institutions have different policies and procedures for transferring academic credit earned abroad. Most universities that pre-approved the program will automatically process program credit once transcripts are received by the Registrar's office. Some universities may require a formal review process before program credit is applied towards the student's academic record. You should consult with an academic and/or study abroad advisor on your campus. If you are not sure what to do, please call our office. We will be glad to assist you.

## **REFUND OF SECURITY DEPOSIT**

The security deposit will be refunded after the onsite staff verifies that all damages and extra charges have been settled. Verification can take up to 3 months. The cost of repairs and unsettled bills will be deducted from your deposits. To be eligible for the refund, students must return the completed post-program documents within 60 days of the program end date.

Refunds will be mailed to the address indicated on the Security Refund Form. Students using a KEI Payment Plan will have the refund amount deducted from the last scheduled payment(s), if applicable. Students who do not pay their program fee or payment plan installments by the set deadline dates forfeit the security deposit and remain liable for any remaining balance owed.

## **KEI AMBASSADOR INTERNSHIP**

We recognize that returning home can be overwhelming. Students are excited to talk about their experience abroad but often find it difficult to find an audience to listen. You may be graduating soon but not sure of your professional future or just need work experience. And it wouldn't hurt to replenish your budget. The KEI Ambassador Internship was designed to address these issues.

The internship has three goals:

1. Provide alumni with the opportunity to share their experience abroad with students, professors and advisors.
2. Provide work experience in public relations, promotions and networking - people skills useful for all professions.
3. Earn money towards education, future study abroad or whatever needs may arise.

### **Responsibilities**

KEI Ambassadors have the following responsibilities

1. Represent KEI on campus
2. Advise students about KEI programs
3. Attend the study abroad fair and other international education events on campus
4. Organize an information table on campus twice per month
5. Organize presentations about their experience abroad and KEI programs to fraternities, sororities, academic clubs and student organizations on campus
6. Answer email inquiries from students interested in studying abroad
7. Assist students through the application process
8. Manage a small budget

Interns are supervised by a Regional Manager who will assist in accomplishing the above tasks.

### **Rewards**

Financial rewards are based on each student referred who participates on a KEI program.

1. Financial rewards:
  - \$100 for every student participating on a Summer program.
  - \$200 for every student participating on a Semester or Quarter program.
  - \$300 for every student participating on an Academic Year program.
  - \$200 bonus for every 5th student.
2. Bonuses after referring 5 students who attend a KEI program:
  - A \$250 Ambassador Grant plus the \$500 GO Again Grant if you decide to study abroad again with KEI.

- Conversion of all referred participants through the Refer-A-Friend promotion.
3. Letter of recommendation after successful completion of the internship.

### **Rules & Regulations**

For the purposes of the KEI Ambassador internship, "Referrer" is the person who refers others to a KEI program and "Referee" is the person referred by a Referrer. The following rules and regulations apply. The KEI Ambassador must register for the internship by completing the KEI Ambassador Application and returning to KEI (email, fax, mail).

- KEI Ambassadors are expected to devote 2 to 4 hours per week to the internship and stay in regular contact with their KEI Regional Manager.
- The KEI Ambassador must be the first point of information about KEI for the Referee.
- The Referee must indicate the KEI Ambassador's name and contact information on his/her KEI application or through email to a KEI advisor.
- Information provided by the Referee supersedes all other.
- KEI Ambassador can refer multiple people.
- Referee can only be referred by one KEI Ambassador.
- Referee can not refer his/her KEI Ambassador.
- Rewards will be disbursed after the Referee registers for a KEI program and pays all fees. Reward checks will be mailed via USPS to the Referrer's home address. It is the Referrer's responsibility to provide accurate mailing address.
- KEI employees and KEI employee family members are not eligible to participate in the KEI Ambassador internship.
- KEI reserves the right to change the amount of the reward, program rules and cancel the program at any time.

### **What next?**

If you are interested in the KEI Ambassador program, contact your Program Manager. We will send you detailed information, training guides, marketing tools, etc.

### **EMPLOYMENT WITH KEI**

Are you graduating and looking to launch a career in international education? Do you like travel? KEI offers several entry level positions that are perfect for recent graduates. For obvious reasons, we prefer having program alumni on staff. We encourage you to consider a position with KEI.

Visit the KEI website or contact your Program Manager for more information about job openings.

### **PHOTO & STORY CONTEST**

The Photo and Story Contest provides a venue for KEI alumni to share their experiences abroad through visual and narrative story telling. Sharing your experience with friends, family and future program participants is one of the best ways to reduce post-program blues and re-entry shock and relive your experiences abroad. Contest finalists receive a \$250 US prize, and have their submissions showcased in print and digital literature.

Students are required to submit an "artist book" illustrating their experience(s) abroad. The artist book must consist of 5 to 8 photographs accompanied by a brief explanation of each photo. Together, the photographs and accompanying text must be sequenced to tell a visual story of your experience. The artist

book can also consist of a sequence of short video clips with audio narration. The entire video should not exceed 2 minutes.

The artist book can concentrate on a particular event or activity, or take a broader perspective and describe your overall experience abroad; it can emphasize academic, professional, cultural and/or social component(s) of the program; it can also describe your pre-departure, on-site and/or post-program experience.

Note: emphasis must be placed on the visual representation, not the textual and/or audio explanation.

Students may enter more than one artist book. However, each artist book must showcase a different experience. In addition, several students can form a group and submit the artist book(s) as one entity; if the group wins, it will be treated as a single individual and the prize divided equally among the group members.

### **Examples**

There are numerous possibilities for story telling. Just think of your favorite or most memorable experience(s) and showcase it with photos/video and narration. Below are just a few examples. Visit the KEI website for sample of students' work.

#### *Academic Experience*

Photo 1: Meeting fashion faculty and staff at Symbiosis University in India

Photo 2: Field trip to a fashion design company with your professor

Photo 3: Creating a garment

Photo 4: Working with a model to showcase you garment

Photo 5: Attending a fashion show

Photo 6: Displaying your work at Symbiosis University

#### *Cultural Experience*

Video Clip 1: On the train from Moscow to St. Petersburg with the Onsite Director and students

Video Clip 2: Standing in amazement at the Hermitage Museum

Video Clip 3: Taking a ride on the boat through the canals of St. Petersburg

Video Clip 4: Group excursion to the Kirov Ballet

Video Clip 5: Having a group dinner at a local restaurant

Video Clip 6: Building a human pyramid in front of the statue Peter the Great

#### *Professional Experience*

Photo 1: Meeting with the advisor at your school to discuss credit transfer for your clinical internship

Photo 2: Meeting with your supervising physician at the hospital

Photo 3: Your first day making rounds at the hospital

Photo 4: Discussing the history and possible treatment of a patient with your supervising physician

Photo 5: Observing an operation in the OR

Photo 5: Sharing your clinical experience with professors and peers at your home university

#### *Social Experience*

Photo 1: Meeting Spanish students

Photo 2: Hanging-out and eating ice cream with friends at an outdoor café in the Plaza Mayor

Photo 3: Playing soccer with Americans and Spaniards

Photo 4: Riding bicycles in a park

Photo 5: Dancing with friends at a nightclub

Photo 6: Joking around at a birthday party

Photo 7: Saying goodbye to your new friends

Photo 8: Writing an e-mail to your Spanish friends when you return home

## Evaluation

Your artist book will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

- How well does your artist book tell the story of your experience.
- How well does each photo/video clip contribute to the overall story; photos of students are especially welcomed.
- Clarity, quality and composition of your images.
- How well you followed the submission requirements.

It is important that your photos and narration tell a story of your personal experience. Don't rely solely on landscape photos. As beautiful as they may be, if the photos do not showcase your experience they will not make for a good artist book. Be personal. **Preference will be given to photos/video that include people.** The artist book should focus on only one story. However, students are encouraged to submit several artist books.

## Deadline, Requirements & Mailing Address

Entries for both contests must be received by KEI not later than the deadline dates listed below. The Contest is held twice a year. If received after the deadline date, the submission will be considered for the following contest, six months later. Finalists are announced approximately two months after each deadline date. The winning artist and story books will be published on the KEI website and printed in program literature.

**Deadlines:** September 15 or March 15

## Submission Requirements

- Students can submit multiple artist books and/or story books.
- All submissions must be in digital format and viewable on the web. Submission can be done via email or direct link to content on the web.
- Pictures and video must be taken at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi. Audio narration must be dubbed over the video/photos to correspond with each clip. Smooth transition between clips is strongly recommended.
- Your photos, video and/or text narration can not include profanity, vulgar activities, alcohol and/or drugs, nudity and sexual content. Submissions that don't follow guidelines will be automatically disqualified.
- Make sure to include the following in your presentation:
  - The first and last name of each group member.
  - KEI program location where you studied abroad.

## Release

*By submitting your artist book and/or story book to Knowledge Exchange Institute, you grant KEI the right and permission to use all photographs, video, audio and text in promotional materials and publicity efforts, which include, but not limited to, printed literature, direct mailings, print ads, e-mail, internet, and CD/DVD publications. You further understand that your artist book will remain the property of KEI. Permission is further granted to KEI to copyedit the submitted text.*

## STAYING IN TOUCH

We urge you to stay connected to your host country and culture. KEI compiled resources for each program location to help you stay abreast of economic, political and social developments in the host country. We also hope that it will encourage you to become involved in international organizations. The list of resource is by no means comprehensive. But, it is a good starting point. Please contact your Program Manager to obtain this information.