

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

Almost all students stay in university dorms, which are quite large and comfortable.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

The program had the usual orientation with Moroccan student ambassadors who were quite helpful in leading tours of campus and helping exchange students in completing their paperwork. The program also included basic informational sessions on safety and health in Morocco.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure is roughly comparable to that of the UW; however, class sizes are considerably smaller.
- instruction is also roughly comparable
- teacher/student relations are more formal than at the UW, but students expect much more help and flexibility from professors.
- grading/exams is comparable
- administration is less efficient so plan on incorporating additional time to get things done.
- The library is wildly inadequate and computer facilities are always crowded and/or dysfunctional. The internet service is also poor.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

Instruction as a whole is generally good though less is expected of students so the material is generally less challenging.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

Most students stay in the dorms though apartments are available in the city.

b. Which did you choose, and why?

I stayed in the dorms, which were perfectly comfortable and give the most convenient access to campus and too other students.

c. What would you recommend?

The dorms are the best option.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

Campus is a relatively enclosed community. Most students stay on campus and all the necessary amenities are included; however, the town of Ifrane is quite pleasant and has several nice parks, a wonderful marketplace, and a few small bars and clubs for the students.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

The town of Ifrane and Al Akwayan University are very safe areas with excellent health services that are included in mandatory student fees; however, on trips outside of the city is important to be careful of theft and unsafe districts.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community? (e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

Al Akhwayan has numerous clubs and activities that are great for meeting Moroccan students and it is easy to join sports teams.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

The majority of Moroccans hold conservative Islamic views towards women, however, their exposure to Europeans and relaxed culture make them much more tolerant of other cultures and norms in comparison to other Muslim countries.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

ATMs provide easy access to money in most cities.

b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

\$500+

c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any transportation, etc. If so, how did you address them?

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

This program is best suited for students who are open and ready to challenge themselves in a new environment. The language and culture are completely unfamiliar to the average American and require an adventurous spirit.

Likewise the program requires a certain amount of independence. In the end your experience will worthwhile if you are willing to challenge yourself to make it so.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

DH✓

OCT 31 2008

Al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco
Arabic Intensive Summer 2008

1. A) I recommend flying from Fez to Casablanca upon arrival, instead of taking the train. The train can be confusing and should probably not be attempted alone so early in the program.
B) I missed the orientation because I missed my flight to Morocco due to weather delays.
2. A) Classes last 6 hours with minimal breaks. You remain with a single instructor for the entire duration of the program. The teachers are mostly understanding of the difficulties associated with studying abroad, and try their hardest to help students. Exams are difficult but grading is fair. The ABC grading scale, however, is very different and does not transfer over well to the UW grading scale.
B) The quality and content of the syllabus was great. It combined classical Arabic with the local dialect, arts, and culture.
C) Students are assigned to instructors based on class level.
D) Arabic language credits transfer over to satisfy UW language requirements.
3. A) Students must stay on campus in the dormitories, but can choose either a double or a single room.
B) I chose to stay in a double so that I could become friends with my Moroccan roommate.
C) I strongly recommend staying in a double room.
4. The campus is very closed and protected. About a mile away is the small city of Ifrane, with a market and small suburbs.
5. The majority of students got amoebic dysentery or parasites at some point during the trip. Although they assure you the cafeteria food at the University will not make you sick, students got sick regardless of whether or not they ate outside or inside the university. Don't eat the fresh ice cream, it will give you hepatitis. Also, unless you are highly proficient in Arabic or French, you will have a very difficult time communicating with the on campus doctors. Also, call Hall Health after you are given medications to double check whether or not you should really be taking all of them because they often incorrectly prescribed.
6. A) Make friends with your Moroccan roommate and their Moroccan friends!! Take advantage of this and join them in their day and night activities.
B) There are huge differences regarding appropriate dress and behavior for women, which differ depending on which region you are in. Be VERY aware of your surroundings.
7. A) Transfer money online, money wires are excessively difficult. Take money out of ATMs in large cities, because there is often a large withdrawal fee per transaction.

B) About \$500 per *month* in spending money. The recommended amount of \$600 total was not sufficient for any of the students.

C) I missed my flight back to the US because I slept through my alarm and it cost me an additional \$1000. Don't miss your flight!!!

8. A) IPE should offer more scholarships for studying abroad.

9. This program is best suited for an adventurous student with thick skin. If you complain a lot and do not like trying new foods or experiences, you should not go on this program because you will not be happy.

10. The program was more difficult academically, emotionally, and physically than I expected.