

# khon kaen thailand

development and  
globalization

Spring 2010

## Program Handbook

**explore – discover – transform**

## CIEE Study Center at Khon Kaen University Khon Kaen, Thailand

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## Part I: The CIEE Program in Khon Kaen

### WELCOME TO YOUR ADVENTURE IN THAILAND

Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country to have avoided European colonization. This independence is reflected in the name of the country, Muang Thai, which translates as "Land of the Free." Historically, Thailand has managed to adapt to changing world and local circumstances, as it did in 1932 when an absolute monarchy was replaced by a constitutional one. Today, Thailand has maintained one of the world's fastest growing economies through increased trade and tourism with Asia and the West.

The geography is diverse, ranging from long coastlines in the south, to rugged mountains in the north, to plateaus in the center and northeast. The geography is mirrored by the populations in each region. Lifestyles and cultures include sea fishermen, rice farmers and hill tribe peoples.

#### Participants say...

Thailand is a microcosm, containing almost every type of social, environmental, political, and economic issue. We traveled to various sites, spoke with villagers and activists, participated in local projects, and traded thoughts and impressions. My spirit and enthusiasm were continually inspired by the strong connections I made with Thai friends and faculty.

### Khon Kaen and the Northeast

Khon Kaen is situated in the center of the northeast region known as Isaan. Divided into 19 provinces, Isaan covers approximately 170,000 square kilometers and has more than 21 million inhabitants, one-third of Thailand's land area and population.

The majority of Isaan people live in rural areas and make their living as small-scale farmers with a per capita income that is one-third of the national average and one-tenth of the Bangkok average. The people have long faced problems of poor soil fertility, erratic rainfall, insufficient health services and limited employment opportunities.

Despite hardships and poverty, the Isaan people are often recognized as being the most generous and friendly in the nation. Many local traditions are still maintained. Isaan culture is historically and oriented toward the Mekong

River which separates the region from Laos. The vast majority of the population are of Lao ethnicity, but there are also significant numbers of ethnic Khmer in the south, and Chinese in the urban areas.

The city of Khon Kaen is north of Bangkok and has a population of about 250,000. Khon Kaen is Isaan's trade and administrative center and is undergoing rapid growth and modernization. Traditional open-air markets and shop houses are interspersed with shopping malls and high-rise buildings leading to a jumbled appearance. Traffic congestion and related pollution—caused by a hodge-podge of bicycle taxis, motorcycles, cars, buses and trucks of all shapes and sizes—are common. Still, the city retains its unique Isaan characteristics through its people.

Famous for the beauty and quality of its silk, Khon Kaen also houses a branch of the National Museum containing many fine examples of bronze, stone and ceramic artifacts from important archaeological sites in the northeast.

#### Participants say...

Isaan is a great region, people are nice, and the town is big enough to have quite a bit going on.

### YOUR HOST: KHON KAEN UNIVERSITY

KKU, or Khon Kaen University, is four kilometers north of the city on 2,500 acres. It was founded in 1964 to serve as the regional university, at first focusing on agriculture and science. Since its founding, KKU has grown to include 18 faculties which offer bachelor's, master's, and professional degrees in fields such as fine arts, law, education, engineering, health and medicine, and the physical and social sciences. Approximately 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students study at KKU each year. There are around 1,500 full-time faculty members and an additional 4,000 part-time faculty and staff.

Most undergraduate students reside in the campus dormitories or live in private dormitories adjacent to the campus. The majority of the faculty and some of the permanent staff also live on campus in government housing. Because of the large resident population, the university is its own self-contained community with plenty of restaurants, shops, and recreational areas.

Although KKU is the leading educational and research institution in the region, its resources are not equal to those of major U.S. institutions.

The central library has limited and dated English language materials. The main language of instruction is Thai, and the majority of instructors have done at least some graduate study abroad.

The CIEE program contributes to the KKU community in a number of ways. With the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Law, respectively, it co-sponsors the annual Isaan Community Gathering in December that brings together villagers and networks in the Northeast with KKU faculty and students. A few years ago, the program helped to set up the KKU Journalism Club which produces *KKU Post*, the KKU school newspaper, and current CIEE students are encouraged to contribute. The program has also joined with various KKU faculties in working with students to work on human rights reporting. The program has worked closely with the Law Faculty's Law Center for Society.

## Community

This program is about community, and about organizations, and about hope. What does or can "community" mean? Why do some communities organize and begin to struggle for justice? What role do NGOs play in such a process? How have grassroots social movements provided a framework for long-term social change? How does a "Western" concept like human rights play out in Thailand? What possibilities are there for American students and Isaan communities to form meaningful solidarity?

This semester you will struggle, laugh and learn, and you'll do it as a group. Your own success largely depends on the actions and decisions of your student group community, and our resident staff is there to give you tools to help that process. CIEE's Thailand program is founded on the belief that your sense of ownership of your educational process and the energy you take in directing that process, are requisite to the programs success. The first step is for you to help build your own community, as students.

The group process can and often does take a long time to work through. There will be several days and many meetings devoted to ensuring that it runs smoothly. Of course, the group does not just work together. It strives to be friends, to respect challenge and support each individual, and to look out for each other's well being. We entreat you to share your individual strengths

and skills with the rest of us as you build a supportive, continuing and powerful community.

### Participants say...

The group process at CIEE was incredible. We had our own 14-hour meeting to get to know each other one night. We built incredibly strong relationships. Essentially, the students worked together to take the program where they wanted.

The emphasis on the group process, learning from one another, and working with the communities taught me more than I have ever learned before.

During the course of the program, I learned how to communicate cross-culturally, work well in groups and focus on the process rather than the outcomes. I gained a whole lot of patience.

Your participation on CIEE's Thailand program will be different than your education before now. The overall approach to the course is people-to-people. A profound reworking of worldviews can emerge from people coming together, exchanging ideas, eating, laughing and discussing how a kinder future can be forged on this planet.

This program believes in active learning, meaning "being in the world." In this program you will find yourself surrounded by numerous teachers, including your peers, staff, NGOs, government officials, business people, and community members. Through academic lectures, briefings, trips and workshops, you will begin to understand and build your own community. This active learning process will help further enable understanding about the interconnectedness between personal, local and global communities.

## Academic Program

Based at Khon Kaen University since 1991, the program's focus on development was established in 1994. There is a great deal of emphasis on group process and forming an effective and responsible community. The program is committed to the dialogue and the importance of participation of all parties in the educational process. A good deal of time is given for students to organize amongst themselves and to enjoy the full potential of an educational process that challenges our participants not just academically, but also as human beings.

Final projects are determined through dialogue with Isaan communities, KKU faculty members, and the student group. There is a hope that

students and community members will see the project as part of a collaborative, ongoing relationship. There is an expectation that students will present their findings with KKU and community representatives. Together, the three parties will determine how the project can continue, and pass such information on to the next student group.

### **Academic Culture**

All courses contain extensive experiential components. The required core course combines classroom-based academics with extensive practical field experience. **Students should be aware that the program is an alternative educational model in itself.** Faculty from the University, guest speakers, and resident staff prepares students in the classroom, while practitioners from local NGOs provide guidance during the visits to various development projects. The program places the educational process squarely in the hands of the students as a group. Students gain skills facilitating participation and group dynamics, generating proposals, and organizing special projects.

### **Cultural Activities and Field Trips**

The program seeks to engage students in first hand experiences by exchanging with villagers, NGOs, academics and others who are working for social change at the grassroots level. Students can expect to spend time traveling throughout the Northeast region of Thailand and staying in communities. Students will be introduced to the U.S. student-based non-profit ENGAGE (Educational Network for Global and Grassroots Exchange). Past activities have included interviews with villagers organizing for justice within the Thai legal system. While in communities students are required to interview and photograph community members compiling the data gathered into profiles, opinion articles and photo essays. Students in the past have written a series of eight economic, social, and cultural rights reports in cooperation with local community organizations that examine violations of water development projects; the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers; access to healthcare for people living with HIV/AIDS; and various site visits that examine methods and outcomes of sustainable agriculture and development in the Northeast.

### **Thai Language Instruction, Peer Tutors, Target Language Activities**

The program's Thai language instruction utilizes a proficiency-based approach designed to enable students to function effectively in everyday communicative situations. Courses at all levels combine intensive classroom learning with the use of peer tutors and interactive exercises. Classes are offered at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.

Program participants are paired with Khon Kaen University students for one-on-one Thai language tutorials.

To encourage students to utilize their Thai in informal setting, CIEE frequent group activities for the students, their language teachers, peer tutors, and resident staff. These activities allow students to actively engage their Thai language skills.

**VERY IMPORTANT!** If you have had any classes in Thai language, or previous experience in Thailand or the Thai language, you **MUST** contact the language coordinator and set up a telephone interview **within one month of acceptance** to the program. **You will be placed in the Beginning Thai course regardless of your abilities if you do not have an interview with the language coordinator.**

#### **Participants say...**

The Thai language courses were extraordinary! The focus on relevant development vocabulary was essential and gave me the ability to have meaningful conversations with my host families and roommate. Thai class was challenging, but necessarily so.

CIEE courses were engaging, challenging, and inspiring. Coming from a very academically challenging school, I expected to find the course load un-challenging. This expectation was very wrong. The CIEE staff has developed these courses throughout many years, as seen in course organization, creative course materials, and wonderful field trips that compliment course work. CIEE Thailand courses are designed to challenge students as much as they wish to be challenged, and so I took full advantage of staff at all times throughout the semester. They were always there for me, providing opportunities, when I wished to challenge myself further. Furthermore, small class sizes were conducive to personalized learning.

#### **Nature of Classes**

Participants should be aware that the nature of classes in this program are probably unlike that of classes they take at home. This program is largely an all-encompassing experience. Although there are a few personal days and

short breaks, students may expect to be in class for 8 or more hours per day with no particular observance of weekends.

You will be taking classes exclusively with other CIEE students in the fall semester. However, there may be a number of trips and projects that CIEE students carry out jointly with KKU and other university students in the Northeast.

### Group Project Work

CIEE Thailand's learning model focuses on group work, discussion and participation making this a large part of this program, and as such, students can expect to work with their group after class, including evenings and most weekends. Students should also expect that most of their time in the program will be spent directly discussing topics and issues brought up by local community members with villagers and students. In the past, some students were surprised by the small amount of individual free time they had away from their coursework and from other program participants.

### Student Experience

The program's uniquely strong focus on community and the group process does not follow the typical U.S. education model. The structure of the program is truly best understood by seeing the results of our participants' projects. We encourage you to contact alumni to learn about their time on this program. You can find Alumni contact information in the document titled *Program Dates, Details, & Updates*.

You can also follow our participant's work by reading through the [Human Perspective on Development and Environment](http://cieeblogspot.com) blog at <http://cieeblogspot.com>. The articles posted on this blog are written by current CIEE participants and it includes an archive of articles from past participants.

Prior to the blog, our participants published the *Common Ground* magazine. *Common Ground* documents experiences of both CIEE students and the Thai people they met and befriend along the way, and the serious issues that Thais are living with on a daily basis. It is no longer a class requirement, but a way for students to collect and publish their research compiled during their time on the program. As you can see, many students have taken advantage of this wonderful learning experience over the past 15 years. Prior

to 2005 the name of this publication was *Perspectives*.

Click on the links below to read past issues of ***common ground***.

[Spring 2005](#)  
[Fall 2005](#) (51.3 MB)  
[Spring 2006](#) (58.7 MB)

Click on the links below to read past issues of ***Perspectives***.

[Summer 2001](#) (19.1 MB)  
[Fall 2001](#) (29.8 MB)  
[Spring 2002](#) (23.1 MB)  
[Summer 2002](#) (16 MB)  
[Fall 2002](#) (35.9 MB)  
[Fall 2003](#) (18.2 MB)  
[Spring 2004](#)

Over the past year, program participants have been involved with producing human rights reports focusing on economic, social, and cultural rights. The Fall 2008 group produced the first six reports; the Spring 2009 added two more reports. Since then, the program has helped Isaan university students form a human rights network.

#### Participants say...

The Globalization and Development class was very intellectually and emotionally challenging, in the best possible ways.

This program focuses on experiential learning. The learning experience was completely different from my home school's traditional structure and I have honestly learned more on this program than I ever before!

### Program Calendar

Plan to attend the full program from the arrival date until the departure date. Late arrival to the program site and early departure from the academic program will not be tolerated and will affect your grades.

### Special note regarding visitors

Since the program's schedule is very busy, no visitors are allowed during the program dates. Please make arrangements to have your family/friends meet you BEFORE or AFTER the program.

#### Participants say...

Come with an open mind and heart and do not let preconceived ideas rule your thoughts.

The field trips were really good and educational. I felt I really saw a lot of things that I never would have seen otherwise.

This is not a postcard trip through Thailand. You'll have rare opportunities to speak with natives about development issues and to meet and speak with people normally unavailable to tourists.

## **Program Requirements**

Students are required to take The Human Perspective on Development and the Environment, Directed Research Field Study/Practicum, Social Research Methods, and one Thai language course at their level.

## **Credit**

Total recommended credit for the semester is 15 semester/22.5 quarter hours.

The required language courses have 45 contact hours and recommended credit is 3 semester/4.5 quarter hours per course. The language courses meet intensively for the first six weeks of the program.

The contact hours for the Human Perspective on Development and the Environment is 115 and recommended credit is 6 semester/9 quarter hours.

The Directed Research/Field Study practicum has 96 contact hours and recommended credit is 3 semester/4.5 quarter hours.

Social Research Methods has 45 contact hours and recommended credit of 3 semester/4.5 quarter hours.

## **Faculty**

Courses are taught by the faculty and researchers of Khon Kaen University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, guest lecturers, representatives of the NGO Coordinating Committee on Development (NGO-CORD), government officials, and the Resident Director. The workshops in the Social Research Methods course are carried out by professional journalists from Bangkok.

## **Grading System**

In the CIEE courses, students are normally graded on the basis of a series of short papers, active participation, a three-week-long project and a final paper. On the language courses, assessment is based on daily homework, quizzes, and exams. Letter grades (A, B, C, D, and F) are given with pluses or minuses.

The program also has an ongoing evaluation process throughout the semester. Every two

weeks or so, everyone involved in the program – students, staff, and program facilitators – take a day to reflect on the overall process during a review. It is a time for students to give feedback on various aspects of the program as well as a space for students to work out any issues within the group.

## **Meeting other students**

Beyond having regular contact with your peer tutor and your Thai roommate, you are invited to return to any of your homestay families encountered along the way. You will, of course, have ample opportunity to meet Thai students both in the apartment building and via university activities.

## **Educational Network for Global and Grassroots Exchange (ENGAGE)**

Students also have a chance to work with members of the U.S. student-based group ENGAGE.

ENGAGE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2000 by former participants of the CIEE Thailand program.

Today, ENGAGE works in collaboration with CIEE Thailand, Center for Global Education, Mexico, and the International Honors Program out of Boston Massachusetts.

ENGAGE is a coalition of returned study abroad students that transforms the study abroad experience into lifelong connections and cooperative action between peoples and social movements working towards a just and sustainable world.

[www.engagetheworld.org](http://www.engagetheworld.org)

## **Student ID**

You will receive a student ID from Khon Kaen University with your picture on it. Benefits of a student ID can range from access to the library to reductions in museums and National Parks.

## **THE CIEE PROGRAM**

### **Departure and Arrival**

### **What should I know before I reserve my airfare?**

When it comes to purchasing your airfare, there is no sure way of knowing whether or not you got the best rate. However, there are a lot of on-line

tools that can assist you. The best advice anyone can give you is to do your research before purchasing your ticket. One website is not enough and oftentimes the cheapest ticket is not the one that is right for you.

The first thing to keep in mind is that airlines typically will not let you make a reservation nine months in advance. If you are studying abroad for the fall and spring semester, odds are that you will not be able to book your return ticket for the actual program departure date. Instead, you will have to look at purchasing a ticket that allows you to change your return ticket with little to no additional fees.

There are some student travel agencies that offer special fairs change fee can be as little as \$25 each time you wish to change any of the ticket dates. Although you may find an Internet travel agency who offers you a cheaper ticket, after reading the small print, you could discover that their change fees range anywhere from \$100 to the price of a new ticket.

Nowadays, airlines will also not allow their customers to fly into a foreign country on a one-way ticket. As some countries require visitors to show their return ticket in order to acquire visa, airlines have difficulty keeping track of which country requires what. In order to streamline their approach, most airlines simply will not allow a customer to board without purchasing a return ticket.

Past participants have found great rates on non-refundable tickets with the following companies [www.sidestep.com](http://www.sidestep.com), [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com), [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com), and [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com). Others have gotten creative when making their travel plans by purchasing their domestic tickets separately from their international tickets. It's possible that you can find a better rate at an international airport in a different part of the country. If you can find a deal on a domestic flight to that city, it can save you a significant amount of money.

Other participants have played around with the dates by arriving a day or two early. This is very tricky because participants who arrive early must make their own reservations for the extra nights they are in the host city and they must get from the airport to their hotel and then from the hotel to the study center all on their own. After doing all of this, some students find that they spend their airline savings on hotels and taxis. The key thing to remember is that you cannot arrive after

the official program arrival date, even if it's going to save you a lot of money.

### **Discount on Airfare**

As a part of your program fees you will receive an iNext ([www.iNext.com](http://www.iNext.com)) insurance card/student ID that allows a \$15.00 discount on flights costing \$100.01 to \$249.99 and a \$25.00 discount on flights costing \$250.00 or more when you purchase your airfare through Student Universe ([www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com)). Simply type iNext in the Promo Code text box when you go to finalize your reservation. Student Universe is a travel agency that offers plane tickets at a reduced student rate. Aside from Student Universe's already discounted student fares and the iNext discount, most Student Universe tickets allow changes to the ticket for as little as \$50. If you have one of these tickets, you can make your plans to travel independently even after you have already arrived on-site. Your iNext card is valid for 365 days and the code can be applied towards any two airfares purchased while you are covered by iNext.

### **How do I get there?**

The cost of transportation to and from the program is not included in the CIEE program fee. Students should make their flight reservation to arrive on the date and time indicated in the link titled *Program Dates, Details & Handbook Updates* located on your on-line checklist. Those students whose arrival coincides with the stated times will be greeted by the resident staff at the airport in Bangkok. When you come out of the automatic doors after customs, turn LEFT and proceed to the exit where CIEE staff will be holding a CIEE sign.

### **What happens when I arrive?**

You will fly into Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok. If arriving between 9:00 p.m. and midnight the evening before orientation begins, students should look to **the right** after clearing immigration and customs. Look for staff holding a CIEE sign. After meeting staff, you can decide whether to change money there, whether to take money out with your ATM card, or whether to proceed to the hotel first where staff can direct you to money exchange facilities, overseas calling services, or internet cafes. Please see the link titled *Program Dates, Details & Handbook Updates* located on your on-line checklist.

Upon arrival, please call or email your parents to let them know you had a safe flight and that everything is going well. A brief phone call will relieve them of their worries. At this time you can also pass along exact information on how they may reach you. The beginning of the orientation will be a day or two in Bangkok. Under no circumstances should you leave Bangkok without having contacted your parents. It may be difficult to contact them from the upcountry orientation site.

Please refer to the *Final Mailing* for further instructions on how to get to the CIEE Study Center. The *Final Mailing* will be e-mailed to participants approximately 30 days prior to the program arrival date.



**Tip: Phone home**

Upon your arrival, it is a good idea to call your parents. A brief phone call telling them that you have arrived and are fine will relieve them of any worries. At this time you can also pass along exact information on how they may reach you.

### Online Pre-Departure Orientation (OPDO)

Students begin their study abroad experience in Khon Kaen before even leaving home—by answering a set of predeparture questions about their educational experiences, their reasons for coming on the program, and how they understand social change. A few weeks before the program starts, students are invited to join a listserv where students can share information and learn more about the program from in-country staff. Students can also participate in a CIEE Online Pre-Departure Orientation. Meeting with students online, the Resident Director shares information about the program and site, highlighting issues that alumni have said are important, and giving students time to ask any questions before leaving home. The online orientation allows students to connect with others in the group, reflect on what they want to get out of the program, and learn what others in the group would like to accomplish. The CIEE goal for the pre-departure orientation is simple: to help students understand more about the program and site, as well as their goals for the program, so that they arrive to the program well-informed and return home having made significant progress toward their goals.

Students initially meet in Bangkok and then travel to an orientation site for a few days, where they learn about the overall structure of the program and begin Thai language study. The orientation introduces students to the country,

the culture, and the academic program, as well as provides practical information about living in Khon Kaen. Students are then placed in a five-day community stay. Throughout this time, students continue to study Thai and engage in various group activities. Orientation ends with a series of background lectures on Thai history, society, and culture. At the end of the 20-day orientation, they begin the first unit of the core course. About five weeks into the program, students have a short re-orientation.

### Orientation

All students must arrive on-site by the arrival date and before the start of orientation. Students should not plan on arriving on the program after the official arrival date stated in the document titled *Program Dates, Details & Updates*. The orientation is usually held somewhere in the Northeast, making it very difficult to meet up with the group after the arrival date. If you are delayed en route to the orientation site, you must leave a message with the CIEE home office.

The orientation sessions are designed to introduce you to important cross-cultural issues, to assess your language skills and to cover details of the academic program. You will also participate in a number of group activities designed to help you begin functioning as a group.

As orientation is a busy time for our students and the main goal is to help our participants adjust to their new home, family and/or friends are strictly forbidden from visiting the site. This added distraction would make it more difficult for participants to bond with their peers and to fully integrate themselves into the program.

### CIEE PROGRAM STAFF

The Resident Director, appointed by CIEE in consultation with the academic consortium, supervises and administers the program. The Resident Director can assist you with academic, administrative, and personal matters. The resident staff does not live with the students on campus.

### About the Resident Director

Dr. David Streckfuss has been the Resident Director in Thailand since 1994 and received his Ph.D. in Southeast Asian History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

## About the Program Advisor

Decha Premrudeelert has a Master's degree from Thammasart University and has been working with NGOs in Northeastern Thailand for more than 20 years. Decha has worked with the CIEE program since 1995. He also serves as an advisor to the mayor of Khon Kaen on educational issues.

### Participants say...

Take advantage of the staff they are here to help you accomplish your goals.

## The Group Process

This program relies heavily on the initiative and interest of you as a group of students because we believe fully in the potential of you as a group to draw from your experiences, teach each other, and create products that can clearly and powerfully express what you have seen and thought.

### Participants say...

There was frustration with "the group process," but then again, that was where I grew the most, so therefore this is a huge positive part of the program.

Workshops are one mechanism through which this group process happens. As part of each week's assignments students will come to the workshop with ideas about their most recent community visit. A group of student facilitators will practice facilitation skills by leading the larger student group through a session where students process what they have learned and experienced. For the process to work well, students must value the opinions of others in the group. Listen and consider the opinions of others when they are being offered.

By the end of the semester students will be able to demonstrate basic group facilitation skills and discuss the fundamentals of working in groups.

### Participants say...

Just come let the program speak to you however it does. You will be amazed at its depth but at the same time realize we are all just scratching the surface.

Be willing to share of yourself and challenge many of your worldviews, both academic and personal.

The Khon Kaen program improved my abilities to verbally articulate myself, critically analyze concepts and issues and connect with those around me.

## CIEE Office and Classrooms

The office and classrooms are a minute away from the student apartment. There is a student activity room with three computers, all with internet access. The program also has free wireless service for students who brought laptops. There is also two printers in the student activity room.

## Program Mailing Address

(Your Name)  
CIEE - Khon Kaen  
P.O.Box 91  
Khon Kaen University  
Khon Kaen 40002  
Thailand  
Tel: 66-43-342913

## Street address for Fed/Ex, DHL, and other express carriers

(Your Name)  
CIEE – Khon Kaen  
973/1 Moo 12, Tambon Sila  
Amphur Muang  
Khon Kaen 40000  
Thailand

## HOUSING AND MEALS

Housing is included in the program fee. While not on community visits and staying with host families, students live in off-campus rental units with a Thai roommate. Meals are not included in the program fee and are the responsibility of the student. Students can take meals at the numerous nearby restaurants, featuring both vegetarian and non-vegetarian fare.

You will be sharing your apartment with one Thai roommate. The Thai students have all volunteered to live with CIEE students and have been carefully selected through an application and interview process. Completing the housing questionnaire in this mailing will assist the CIEE-KKU staff in making a good roommate match.

The apartments, where participants are housed, are clean, modern, and have air-conditioning and a fan. You have your own bathroom and a telephone. You may make local calls, and friends and family from home can call in. There is also an internet available in student dorm rooms, but you have to use a LAN cord for access. For laundry, the apartment provides 80 pieces/room/month for free.

More and more, students are coming with cell phones. The program has a cell phone with a SIM card that students can purchase during orientation. Students can sell the cell phone back to the program at the end of the semester, at 80% of the original cost. Students can make local and international calls with the phone, and add money to the phone as they go along.

The apartments are nearby the campus, in an area known as *lang mau* or “behind the university.” *Lang Mau* is a center of university student life and boasts a 7-11 convenience store, a myriad of food stalls, coffee shops, internet cafes, laundry service and other stores – all within a minutes walk.

Living with Thais is one of the most important parts of your learning experience in Thailand. You have to adapt on a day-to-day basis to another culture, another mentality, and another way of facing problems and making decisions. You will be exposed to other points of view and be closely involved with people from a different culture. We believe that if you are happy in your living situation, your studies will progress faster and your adjustment to living in Khon Kaen will be easier. It will also add to your understanding of Thailand and greatly enhance your overall experience.

### What about meals?

Meals are not included in the program fee and are the responsibility of the student. Students should budget extra money accordingly. Students can have meals at the university cafeteria or at local restaurants. Dining on Western food is usually four to ten times more expensive than eating the local fare. Based on past participant feedback, students should expect to budget approximately \$600 per semester.

### Other Costs

At the beginning of the program, you are provided with bedding, a pillow, a blanket, and a motorcycle helmet. You will need to pay a deposit at that time of about \$70. When these items are returned in good order at the end of the program, you will get your deposit money back. You may need to pay for a Thai-English dictionary if you order one. It's cost about \$15. You will also need to pay for course reading packets and the Thai language book and workbook. The combined cost of all course materials has typically been less than \$100.

## Internet

Students have free access to e-mail in the student activity room or by wireless in the area of CIEE facilities. You can also use the internet at the numerous inexpensive local Internet cafés in the area. With an LAN, cable students can also have internet access from their apartment rooms.



### Tip: Try it!

Have an open mind and taste everything you are offered before you decide whether you like it. Thai cuisine is quite delicious, and you may miss out on a wonderful culinary experience if you reject something because you've never had it before.

### Participants say...

The roommates were great. It gave us a chance to practice our Thai.

MAKE the time to reflect with your roommates or peer tutors. They are a great resource.

Living with a Thai roommate was wonderful! It provided cultural immersion even in the comfort of my own apartment!.

## Part II: Before You Leave Home

### A LOT TO LEARN

Preparing for study abroad entails a lot more than just packing a suitcase. In fact, the thought and effort you put into preparing yourself will largely determine the success of the program you are embarking upon. At CIEE, we will do everything we can to provide you with the information you require prior to departure. But there is only so much we can do, and it is important for you to recognize your own responsibilities, which include:

- Thoroughly discussing your study and travel plans with your financial aid office, study abroad office and academic advisor.
- Making any necessary arrangements for the following academic year, including housing, registration and graduate school application. If you are a senior, be sure to make necessary arrangements for graduation.
- **Reading all of the materials that CIEE has sent to you, including this handbook.** Many of the questions that students ask are answered in this handbook.
- Doing additional reading about the region/country you will be visiting and the customs of the host culture. While you couldn't possibly be prepared for every new experience that awaits you, reading about the

host country will give you a base of knowledge that will serve you well in the early weeks of the program. (Refer to the Reading List at the back of this handout for required and recommended reading.)

- Arriving at the program site with an open mind, a sense of adventure and a positive attitude toward what lies ahead.

In addition to these required steps, there is a lot more we recommend you do to inform yourself before you go.

### The Glimpse Foundation

CIEE is an institutional member of The Glimpse Foundation. As a CIEE student, you get access to a full range of services that will help you prepare for your time abroad and/or enable you to share your insights during and after your overseas experience.

These services include:

- Access to Glimpse's content archive, which currently contains over 400 student-written articles from 88 countries.
- Access to the Glimpse 'Ask the Expert' database so you can connect with current and returned study abroad students in your country/region.

To get started you will need to register on GlimpseAbroad.org at:  
<http://www.glimpseabroad.org>.

Once you've registered, simply login with your personal username and password and enjoy access to the services outlined above.

### Get a Good Guidebook

Past participants recommend that you purchase a good guidebook and read a lot of it before you go! The *Lonely Planet* series is useful. Other guidebooks include the *Let's Go*, and *Real/Rough Guide* series. *Insight* guides provide good background and cultural information. Pay particular attention to sections on obtaining maps and other information from tourist offices, customs of the host country, currency exchange, telephoning home, safety, transportation and general travel advice.

#### Participants say...

Read *Culture Shock! Thailand* or something like that before you go.

### Tap Other Resources

Other good ways to learn about your new home:

- Check your college or university study abroad office for useful services and information.
- Seek out Thais through cultural organizations, international student organizations and Thai or Asia area studies departments or centers at your college or university.
- Surf the Web. Many web sites, such as [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com), offer travel information, slide shows and tips from other travelers.
- Check libraries for detailed information and keep yourself informed of current events through the news media.

Consult the list of past program participants in your acceptance packet. They have agreed to be contacted about their experience. Some of their comments are interspersed throughout this book.

### Check Travel Advisories

The U.S. government issues travel advisories and consular information sheets for most countries. To receive updated information or advisories for Thailand or other countries you may be traveling to, call (202) 647-5225 or visit the following website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). You can also get this info at any of the 13 regional passport agencies, by writing and sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Citizens Emergency Center, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Room 4811, N.S., U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520.

### Be Informed about Home, Too

It is important that you be well informed about your own country, region, and hometown. New friends and acquaintances in your host country will be just as curious about you as you are about them. Be prepared to discuss your home political system, culture, traditions, history, holidays, geography and social structures.

#### Participants say...

Don't come with preconceptions, have an open mind....Don't be picky....absorb your surroundings.

### ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

When preparing to travel and live abroad, it is essential that you obtain all the proper documents prior to your departure. CIEE cannot accept responsibility, financial or otherwise, for a student who travels without the proper documents.

## Passports

You are responsible for obtaining a passport prior to the start of your program, and in the case where a visa must be secured, prior to the visa application deadline. U.S. citizens currently can expect major delays in obtaining a passport, even when expedited. If you did not apply for your passport already, please do so **immediately**.

You must have a signed passport, valid for a minimum of six months after the date you enter Thailand or for the duration of your program plus any travel, whichever is longer. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately as the process can take several weeks or even months. If you already have a passport, be sure that it is valid for the required period.

### **Trap: Passport pitfalls**

Under no circumstances should your passport be altered. Guard it carefully against loss or theft. Do not forget to sign your passport. Never pack your passport in luggage while traveling; it should be easily accessible at all times.

U.S. citizens applying for their first passports must apply in person at a passport agency or at one of the several thousand federal or state courts or U.S. post offices authorized to accept passport applications. Applicants must present the following materials:

- 1) A completed Passport Application Form (DS-11).
- 2) Proof of U.S. citizenship (certified birth certificate, expired passport, certificate of naturalization, or consular report of birth).
- 3) Personal identification bearing your photograph and signature, e.g., a valid driver's license.
- 4) Two recent passport-sized photographs.
- 5) A check or money order for \$97.

Passport requirements could have changed since this document was published. For the most up-to-date requirements, please visit the U.S. Department of State website ([http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html)).

### **Tip: Take a lost passport kit**

It happens. So save yourself a major headache. Take with you two U.S.-produced passport photos, a certified copy of your birth certificate (which you can shrink to wallet size), and the face page of your passport. Keep this "lost passport kit" separate from your actual passport. Also leave one copy of the passport face page with your parents or guardian and give another copy to CIEE staff at the host site.

For passports, plane tickets and valuable belongings, we provide a safety deposit box to keep them safe.

## Visas

A visa is an endorsement or stamp placed in your passport by a foreign government allowing you to enter and stay in that country for a specified period of time.

You are responsible for applying for your own visa. However, CIEE assists you by paying the consular and service fees when you use Trivisa. The sole responsibility of their consultants is to work closely with consular agents to expedite passports and visas on behalf of their clients. Most importantly, Trivisa enjoys very good working relationships with all consulates and embassies and are trained to walk you through any passport or visa situation.

Before you can apply for your Thai visa, a letter from Khon Kaen University must be issued. This document is not immediately available to CIEE and we must wait until the University releases it before we can send it to our participants. While we work on obtaining the document, you should begin organizing and completing your visa application. Once we have the document, we will contact you with further instructions. Please do not mail your visa application to Trivisa until after CIEE has notified you.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** If you plan to arrive in Thailand more than a week before the start of the program, please apply for the Multiple Reentries Visa in order to prevent future complication on the visa extension procedure.

For further information concerning your visa application, please refer to the link titled *Visa Information* located on your on-line checklist.


### The Visa Process: **What is Trivisa?**

*Trivisa is a visa service that CIEE has contracted with to obtain your visa for you. Located in Washington, DC, Trivisa works with embassies and consulates to expedite visa processing on your behalf. As noted in "Instructions, Visa Information and Required Forms" document on the Enrollment Website, you will work directly with Trivisa to get your visa and all consular and processing fees are covered in your program fee.*

If you live outside of the United States or plan to depart the United States prior to the designated program start date, you will be responsible for obtaining your own non-immigrant visa—not a tourist visa. In order to do this, you will need to obtain a letter of sponsorship from CIEE and

KKU addressed to the appropriate Thai officials. We will need some lead-time in order to obtain these for you and cannot guarantee that these will be ready prior to your early departure. So you must contact us immediately regarding your visa application process.

**Note: Employment in Thailand is prohibited as a condition of your visa.**

 **Trap: Applying from outside the United States**  
A U.S. student applying for a visa from outside of the United States might not be able to obtain one. Please check with the appropriate consulate.

### **Documents for non-U.S. Citizens**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, check with your consulate for regulations regarding your stay in Thailand and reentry into the United States. As visa procedures may vary, you should also check with the Thai consulate that has jurisdiction over your place of residence immediately for their specific visa procedures. Failure to do this may result in your being refused permission to enter the country, or not even being allowed to board the aircraft at the point of departure. Also, you should call the nearest district office of the INS, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, for information on the documents necessary for you to leave and re-enter the United States.

### **What documents do I need as a permanent resident?**

Permanent residents need to apply for a Re-entry Permit, which serves as a passport while overseas. Being out of the United States for more than one year may jeopardize your permanent resident status. Check with the nearest INS office for information regarding documentation and procedures for return to the United States.

### **What documents do I need as a stateless person?**

If you do not have a country of citizenship, contact the nearest INS office and the appropriate consulate or embassy to determine the procedures you must follow to obtain the proper travel documents and visas. In addition, be sure to check with the consulate of any country where you may be spending a night or more in transit to the country of your study program. Failure to do this may result in refusal

of permission to enter that country or even to board the aircraft at the point of departure.

### **Thai Consulate Locations**

There are Royal Thai Consulate-Generals in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Their addresses can be found on the website for The Royal Thai Embassy in Washington D.C. at [www.thaiembdc.org](http://www.thaiembdc.org).

### **Immunization Records**

Thailand does not require vaccinations unless you are a citizen of, or arriving from, one of a number of less-developed countries or sites of disease outbreak. But, if you enter countries where immunizations are required, you must present a record of vaccinations. The most widely recognized document for this purpose is the yellow World Health Organization booklet, International Certificates of Vaccination, which is available from most doctors and health centers. Carry this document with your passport.

## **HEALTH**

### **What health-related steps should I take before I leave?**

You are required to complete a medical report in order to participate in the program; please be sure it indicates any allergies you have, in particular to medications. This information is confidential and has no bearing on your participation in the program. If you have a chronic illness that needs medical attention, have your doctor write a clinical report that can be given to a specialist in Thailand if necessary. In addition, we strongly urge you to have a complete physical and dental checkup before departing. Any required dental work should be done at home. Women should also have a checkup by a gynecologist.

### **What medical supplies should I take with me?**

If you take prescription drugs, take a sufficient supply with you for your time abroad. (Be sure to take these in their original packages and with the original prescription.) Students who wear glasses or contact lenses should be sure to take an extra pair as well as a copy of their prescription.

If you use contraceptives, please take an adequate supply with you. Note that if you have

traveler's diarrhea, oral contraceptives may not stay in your system long enough to be absorbed.

Be prepared for the common cold and for stomach and intestinal disorders often caused by changes in diet and drinking water. It might be wise to take along small amounts of medications in case these problems arise; your doctor may suggest which drugs to consider. Remember, however, to be careful about treating yourself, and be sure to seek professional help when necessary.

Be sure to take medicine for any recent or chronic ailment that might recur in Thailand. Note, however, that past participants report that "for every ailment [you] come up with, there is an over-the-counter medicine for it here."

### **What other precautions should I take?**

Variations in climate, diet and emotional stress from adjusting to a new culture and being away from home cause some students to experience minor health problems during their time in Thailand. Inform the resident staff of any existing health problems, including mental health or any potential problems you anticipate arising throughout the course of the program. **This includes allergies to any medications.** CIEE staff will use this information to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made. Please inform the resident staff if you become ill during the program.

**Vaccinations:** Although no vaccinations are necessary, the CDC, Centers for Disease Control, recommends that people traveling to Southeast Asia get a hepatitis A shot as well as booster vaccines for tetanus (Td) and polio (eIPV). CDC also recommends bringing normal childhood vaccines up to date: measles, mumps, rubella (MMR Vaccine) and pertussis.

Remember that vaccinations need to be planned well in advance; **begin the process at least 10 weeks prior to departure.**

**Tropical Diseases:** Travelers to Thailand may be exposed to diseases such as malaria, dengue fever and typhoid fever. The risk of infection depends on the area you visit and the precautions you take. In general, Khon Kaen is not subject to diseases such as malaria. If you are planning to travel to more remote areas of Southeast Asia before or after the program, you should take appropriate medication. Wait to

obtain malaria medication until you arrive, as the clinics in Thailand are better informed about the various types of malaria in different rural regions.

**Stay healthy through prevention:** The most important factor in staying healthy is prevention. To greatly reduce the risk of infection:

- Protect yourself from insect bites.
- Ensure the quality of food and drinking water.
- Be knowledgeable about potential diseases.

**AIDS:** The HIV virus is now pandemic, meaning it is present everywhere, including Asia. Take the appropriate precautions. Many U.S. doctors are concerned about needle re-use in some countries. Should you need an injection while in Thailand, make sure the needle comes sealed in a special package and is torn open in front of you. This is normally done in the hospital you would go to in Khon Kaen.

**CDC Recommendations:** Included in this mailing are recommendations by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) for those preparing to go to Thailand. If you plan to travel after the program to other countries, you may want to consult the CDC information specific to these countries. The CDC website is [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

### **Participants say...**

Some of the strong points included challenging me to write more creatively, enabling me to see how people are working to solve their environmental and other social problems, allowing us to discuss what we learned during our trips, and finally, giving us some free time to think about ourselves.

### **INSURANCE**

If you are covered by a personal or parental insurance plan, CIEE recommends that you continue this coverage while abroad. Prior to departure, you should contact your current insurance carrier concerning coverage for accidents, illnesses, and liability cases that occur outside the United States. Check your policy's limitations before making any assumptions about coverage. Most U.S. based insurance companies will not cover property lost or stolen overseas.

### **CIEE Accident and Sickness Insurance**

Each participant is covered by an Accident and Sickness Insurance policy designed to help cover the cost of accidents and/or routine sickness while abroad. Additionally, the policy offers Emergency Evacuation and Emergency Medical Transportation coverage, together with a 24-hour Travel and Medical Assistance Service.

The policy also offers travel document replacement and limited travel delay and lost/stolen baggage coverage. Coverage begins two weeks before the program start date and continues for 364 days.

A complete description of the Accident and Sickness Insurance policy is on the enrollment website. It is important that you read the policy carefully and note exactly what coverage it provides, and note items that are excluded from coverage.

The Accident and Sickness Insurance is designed as an additional or top-up policy only, and does not cover liability. It also does not include routine physical, dental examinations, or preventive medicine. Students are not covered for injuries resulting from acts of war or other political unrest such as riots and demonstrations.

Please note that CIEE does not cover medical expenses on-site. Students pay for any medical costs incurred and then file a claim directly with the insurance company for reimbursement. CIEE does not act as an intermediary between participants and the insurance company.

### Primary Insurance Plan Brokers

If you do not have a primary insurance plan, you may wish to enroll in one. The following brokers have individual insurance plans available:

HTH Worldwide  
[www.hthworldwide.com](http://www.hthworldwide.com)  
Tel: 877-424-4325

Wallach & Company, Inc.  
[www.Wallach.com](http://www.Wallach.com)  
Tel: 800-237-6615

### Paying medical bills up front

Doctors, hospitals, and clinics will require you to pay bills at the time of treatment. You must then submit receipts to the insurance company for reimbursement. With this in mind, be sure to budget at least \$50 to pay for medical expenses and unexpected illnesses up front.

## PERSONAL FINANCES

### Cost of Living

The exchange rate is not constant. The *New York Times* and similar publications publish exchange rates daily. You may also reference [www.x-rates.com](http://www.x-rates.com) or [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com) for up to

the minute exchange rates. You should keep abreast of how a rate fluctuates leading up to departure.

### What costs are covered by my CIEE fee?

CIEE Study Center fees include pre-departure information and services, on-site support services, tuition, orientation, cultural activities, local excursions and field trips, sickness insurance. The cost of housing is included in the Khon Kaen program, but the cost of meals is not included. CIEE pays all your essential expenses directly to Khon Kaen University. CIEE does not cover local transportation to and from your classes at the university, nor does it cover the cost of any textbooks.

### What expenses should I budget for?

You will need money for meals, entertainment, toiletries, cosmetics, gifts, local transportation, school supplies and independent travel.


Besides inflation and currency exchange, another variable that will affect your spending abroad is your individual taste requirements. When creating a budget, it may be helpful to consider how much you normally spend in a semester and inflate it a bit. Although the cost of living for a student in Thailand is comparable to that of a student in the United States, the added cost of independent travel along with the impulse to splurge makes **careful budgeting** imperative. Former students have saved considerably through limiting Western-style meals and limiting vacation travel to the general area around Khon Kaen. We suggest you take extra money, if possible, for unforeseeable expenses.

### Program Expenses

Please refer to the CIEE website ([www.ciee.org/isp](http://www.ciee.org/isp)) for estimated expenses.

### Financial Arrangements

You will need to make arrangements regarding traveler's checks, credit cards, and bank cards before leaving home. See the section Money and Banking in Part III for details.

 **Tip: Forget "Hey Mom, send money"**  
It is important that you make arrangements to receive enough money to cover your personal expenses for the time you are in Khon Kaen **prior to your departure from the United States.**

## PACKING AND BAGGAGE

Try to organize and pack a day or two prior to departure so that you can judge if you'll be able to carry your bags (you must be able to do this). Some students have even practiced by carrying their bags around the block! Also, by packing early you'll have time to rest before the long trip.

### What are the baggage limits?

Limits vary. Read the weight limitation and baggage allowance information provided by your international airline carrier. Generally flights overseas permit two pieces of checked baggage and one carry-on piece. Each checked bag must weigh less than 70 pounds. Total dimensions (length + width + height) of the first piece must be less than 62 inches, and the second piece less than 52 inches. Total dimensions of the carry-on must not exceed 45 inches and must be able to fit below the seat in front of you or in the overhead compartment. If your baggage exceeds any of these standards you may be charged for excess baggage. Check with your airline regarding any items that are oversized.

### What should I pack?

For a complete list of what to take, please see the **Suggested Packing Checklist** at the end of this handbook. Experienced travelers agree: take as little as possible.

**Climate and clothing:** The climate is classified as tropical monsoon, with most of the country having three seasons: The hot season lasts from March to June, the rainy season from July to October, and the cooler, drier season from November through February. For Spring semester students, the "cold season" can seem cold so it might be better to bring along a sweater and jacket just in case.

**U.S. students have often said they took too much clothing.** Don't forget that nothing ruins traveling abroad more than having too much luggage, especially when you have to carry it yourself. You can save packing space by coordinating your clothing so that shirts and sweaters can be worn with different skirts and pants.

Thai society places a premium on looking neat and presentable—being *riab roy*. To Thais, your appearance reflects your self-respect and how you respect those around you. Initially you may

be shocked at the degree to which Thais, especially women, dress up.

On your home campus you are no doubt accustomed to an individualized style of dress and freedom of expression. Perhaps it was perfectly acceptable to wear shorts, a tank top, and to go bare-footed to class, weather permitting. In the hot Thai climate, you may be tempted to do the same, but in fact such dress is totally inappropriate on a Thai campus. Be prepared to accept a more conservative and conforming style of dress for all program activities.

Thai students from the elementary school level through university are required to wear uniforms. Female students at KKU wear a white blouse and black skirt with heeled black pumps; male students wear a white dress shirt and black pants with dark dress shoes. Although you do not have to conform strictly with these dress standards, you will need to use considerable discretion in dressing. You will not be allowed to wear shorts, tank tops, low-cut shirts, thongs, ripped or funky clothing to classes or program events.

Bring at least one formal outfit (nice clothes) for occasions such as meeting the KKU president, the provincial governor, or other important officials.

On the other hand, as part of the core course, you will be visiting and staying in local villages that may not have running water. Clothes that you might wear camping would be appropriate for these visits.

In packing, consider that you will be in Thailand for part of the rainy season and thus will want a light rain jacket or windbreaker. Think about bringing shoes and clothing that can withstand rain, mud and vigorous laundering. Here are some specific suggestions:

*For women:* long or short skirts, pants, shirts or blouses with cap sleeves or longer sleeves and covered shoulders, conservative dresses, slip-on shoes with or without socks (leave your nylons at home). Because of the heat, loose-fitting clothing is usually more comfortable; however, you will find that many Thai women prefer very form-fitting skirts and pants. Avoid braless styles, low-cut or backless styles or sheer clothing without underwear or slips.

*For men:* shirts with collars, long pants, and comfortable slip-on or tie shoes. Avoid wearing

T-shirts or going native with the Chinese-style lounge pants.

Thailand is hot and humid, so pack easy-to-wash, quick drying and lightweight clothes. Cotton and polyester both work well. Clothing can be fairly cheap in Thailand; however most Thais are smaller than Westerners and you may have trouble finding your size.

#### **Participants say...**

Bring very little; buy clothes and other needs here.

**Prescriptions:** If you take prescription drugs, ask your doctor to give you a copy of the prescription **with the name of the generic drug, not a brand name**, as your brand may not be available in Thailand.

**Linens:** It is essential that you bring your own towels.

#### **Electrical Appliances**

Electric current in Thailand runs at 220 volts, 50 cycles and not 110 volts, 60 cycles as in the United States. Electric converters and adapter plugs must be used to connect North American equipment. Travel supply shops and some hardware stores in the United States carry them. If you plan to bring any electrical appliance from home, you must also bring a converter and adapter with you because they are more expensive in Thailand.

If you are buying any new electrical items to bring with you, try to get dual-voltage models so you won't need a converter at all—though you may still need an adapter plug. If you use a blow dryer, bring a small, dual-voltage travel model (Ronson and Braun make them) and an adapter plug.

The following website provides a lot of helpful information concerning electrical outlets and voltage compatibility:

<http://users.pandora.be/worldstandards/electricity.htm>.

**Tape/digital recorder:** Many students have found it useful to bring a small portable tape/digital recorder to tape lectures or exchanges in content courses.

**Mementos from home:** Bring things from home that you can share with your Thai friends. This includes pictures of yourself and your family in the United States, recipes you like to cook, typical items from your community, college, or

region of the United States, and items related to talents you may have and wish to share.

**Gifts:** You may find that some Thai people you meet are very generous, and you feel inclined to repay their generosity with a small gift. For other acquaintances, it will be best to purchase items available locally rather than bring something all the way from home.



#### **Tip: Bring Photos!!!!**

Many Thais appreciate the gift of a photo of you in your home surroundings. In general, Thais love to look at photographs. Bringing along a small photo album with shots of friends, landscapes, and home environments can help increase cross-cultural understanding between you and your new acquaintances.

#### **What if I want to have things mailed to me abroad?**

If you are considering having some items mailed to you after your arrival, see the section on **Post Office and Mailing Procedures** in this handbook.

#### **PREPARING FOR CULTURAL ADAPTATION**

Although cultural adaptation is highly individual, research indicates that most people go through similar stages in adapting to a new environment. Any travel you've done abroad, and perhaps even within your own country, has exposed you to culture shock. But if you've never had to overcome culture shock, you might want to read about it before you depart. You'll find books relating to cultural adaptation and culture shock on the recommended reading list at the back of this handbook.

During your on-site orientation, the resident staff will discuss details about culture shock and give strategies for adapting to your new surroundings. Near the end of the program, they will also provide information on reverse culture shock and suggest ways of coping with returning home.

#### **Participants say...**

This program is an intense challenge to the way Americans think about world development and who actually benefits. It is essential to see this side of development to understand where your actions have their final effects.

We were able to interact with the people involved and affected by the development issues we were studying. There is no greater experience than being able to see the people and places behind the statistics.

## **Part III: Living in Khon Kaen**

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Sometimes living in a university environment abroad makes it easy to forget you're not home. Remember, you are in another country with its own laws and customs, and they are different from the ones you're used to. Be aware of this and conduct yourself accordingly. Also, be sure to attend classes regularly and participate in program activities.

The orientation described in Part I will also cover practical aspects of living in a new place, Thai laws, proper social conduct and cultural differences, including race, gender and class. For example, some past participants have found that many Thai nationals had a distorted and stereotyped image of U.S. women, often acquired through advertising, television and movies. The resident staff will provide insights into the local culture's view of women and suggest ways to reduce anxiety and to ensure personal safety.

### **Meeting Thais**

Just as it is impossible to define a typical American, it is equally impossible to define a typical Thai. You will meet many types of people in Thailand who have different opinions, attitudes and habits. The more you interact with Thai people, the better chance you'll have of forming relationships and understanding the culture. During these interactions use common sense, intelligence and a sense of objectivity.

Be prepared to discuss your views freely and openly, and try to listen with an open mind.

You may arrive in Thailand with some preconceptions about Thais and may encounter some Thais with preconceptions about people from the United States. Try to put aside stereotypes and make judgments based on real experiences. If you are confronted with what you feel is a false stereotype about the United States, be frank and truthful, yet tactful in your response. Avoid refuting arguments with odious comparisons to Thailand. This type of response will only create bad feelings. A positive and serious response from you will help dispel myths about the United States.

Refrain from becoming involved in matters you may misunderstand, such as domestic disputes or public brawling. Because saving face is so important to Thais, stepping into what is seen as an internal affair may exacerbate the situation.

Drinking alcohol is a popular leisure-time activity among Thai males. Our experience shows it is best to ignore drunken people when possible and avoid confrontation, a response very much in line with Thai cultural norms. Although much less frequent than in other places, there are occasional reports of incidents involving handguns in the Thai press, which usually indicate that the persons involved were under the influence of alcohol; practice common sense and discretion—avoid encounters with intoxicated people.

Note that Thai society is somewhat ethnocentric and people in Khan Kaen may stare at you because you look different. The CIEE resident staff is sensitive to these issues and will provide as much information and support as possible.

### **Special Note to Women**

Since women do not have the same status or role in Thailand as in the United States, some female students may experience difficulties. Many Thais do not understand that the U.S.-style familiar manner with strangers is merely a gesture of friendliness. Outgoing behavior may be misconstrued as something more. A smile at a stranger could possibly be misunderstood as an invitation to spend the evening together.

#### **Participants say...**

I did find it a bit difficult to be a woman in Thailand. I think the pre-departure material was very informative and most suitable.

### **SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

The health and safety of program participants abroad is understandably an important issue for all concerned. CIEE was a founding member of the Inter-Organization Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad. The following website contains information about the Task Force and study abroad safety issues – <http://nafsa.org/regulatoryinformation/default.aspx?id=6775&terms=Health+safety>.

The CIEE approach to safety is threefold. First, we conduct a careful safety evaluation of every program we run. Next, when the students arrive on site, we conduct a thorough orientation that includes tips on reducing risk and handling difficult situations should they arise. Finally, program staff continuously monitors local conditions in order to provide guidance to participants throughout their stay.

Experience has shown that the single most important factor in assuring a safe study abroad experience is the sensible and cautious behavior of the participants themselves. When traveling abroad, you should exercise additional caution until you become familiar with your new surroundings. Always remain alert to what is going on around you, especially in crowded tourist areas and on public transportation.

Road accidents are one of the leading causes of death in Thailand. We encourage you not to ride motorcycles or motor scooters.

Be aware of the heating situation provided by your host institution and host residence. For locations where carbon monoxide-producing appliances may be present – i.e., any appliance that burns fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal – detailed information on the possible dangers associated with such appliances, along with safe operating instructions, will be provided in the on-site program orientation. For further information, please visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).

#### Participants say...

If a car honks behind you, move quickly. If a car flashes its high beams, move out of the way.

Petty thefts are a problem in public places, including the university facilities. Take care to lock your apartment room, even if visiting someone in a nearby room. If you are the victim of a pickpocket, or if something is stolen, inform the Resident Director who will help you make a report.

Rapes, although infrequent, have been reported to the university. Female students should not walk alone on campus after dark.

Enforcement of fire safety regulations is inadequate in Thailand including unclearly marked fire escapes, locked fire escape doors, and insufficient alarms and fire extinguishers. Be alert.

#### **Trap: Letting down your guard**

When visiting a foreign country, you may well be enchanted by your surroundings and engage in behavior that is not typical of you. This may cause you to let your guard down and be susceptible to crime. Practice common sense and exercise good judgment. **Remember that you are more likely to be a victim of crime if you have been drinking alcohol.**

## COMMUNICATIONS AND MAIL

### Telephone

You will not be able to make international phone calls from the office telephone unless it is an emergency.

It is easy for parents and friends to call you at your apartment or on your personal cell phones (if you choose to use one).

If you have a mobile phone, international calls can be made easily and at a reasonable price. Without having to be registered, you can call abroad instantly using *1-2-call*, *True* or *DTAC* services. There are few calling options

1. Dial 009 + country code (US 01) + area code + number (5baht/m)
2. Dial 008 + country code (US 01) + area code + number (7baht/m)
3. Dial 007 + country code (US 01) + area code + number (9baht/m)
4. Dial 001 + country code (US 01) + area code + number (9baht/m)

We recommend you dial 009 since it is the cheapest. Although the signal isn't as clear as 001 but it isn't that bad either.

Many students with laptops use services such as skype to call back home.

Remind friends back home that Thailand is 7 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, 12 hours ahead of the East Coast of the United States. So when it's noon in New York, it's midnight in Khon Kaen.

#### Participants say...

U.S. phone cards do not work.

### E-mail

There are numerous Internet cafes near the student apartments and what must be one of the highest densities per capita of Internet cafes in Khon Kaen city. Some cafes, like CSK Internet, are open 24 hours and are equipped with high speed Internet access, video cameras and are up-to-date with the most modern/high-tech equipment. The cost is usually 18 baht an hour, or about 40 cents.

**Special Note:** Although we understand that students come well integrated into the world of electronic mail and recognize its role in helping you communicate with those back home about

your experiences, we nonetheless would like students to reflect on the importance of trying as much as possible to “be here.” You have traveled far to Thailand. Don’t become too immersed; it essentially removes you from your locality.

### Post Office and Mailing Procedures

Airmail packages and letters to Thailand usually take 1-2 weeks. Encourage friends and family to write frequently, but inform them not to send expensive items through the mail as there is a possibility of their mail being misdirected.

## MONEY AND BANKING

Arrive in Thailand with several ways to obtain money, so that in the event one method fails or is inconvenient, a back-up option is available. The best options are ATM/credit cards and travelers checks. They are recommended as the best means of handling your personal finances.

### Money

The national currency is the baht, broken down into 100 satangs.

### Credit Cards and ATM/Bank Cards

An ATM/Debit card is the most efficient and easiest way to obtain funds, but it should not be your only way. With an ATM/Debit card you are able to obtain cash at many ATMs located in the city. It is also easy for someone in the U.S. to add funds to your account in case you overdraw or need additional funds. We recommend that you also bring American Express Traveler’s Checks in case your card is ever lost or stolen.

You may also bring a cash card or credit card. Visa is the most accepted, followed by American Express and MasterCard. In an emergency, you can obtain a cash advance against the card in almost every province of Thailand. However, because the cash advance fee is so high, you should not use this method as your primary or secondary source of funds. This should really be for emergencies only.

**Trap: PIN numbers**  
For both credit cards and bank cards, inquire with the issuer to verify that the card is valid for an international banking system. And memorize your PIN in numbers not letters; Foreign phone pads are often configured differently.

## Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are the safest form of payment. They can be readily converted into baht or other currencies at any bank, in any country you may visit, and in Thailand they give the best exchange rate although the time for conversion in Khon Kaen can be considerable. As long as you have a record of your traveler's check numbers, you can recover stolen or lost amounts. Be sure to buy your traveler's checks before you depart the United States. You will need your passport to cash them.

**Tip: Credit card and traveler's check numbers**  
Remember to keep a list of your credit card numbers and traveler's check numbers separate from the cards and checks.

There is a fee for cashing each check, so buy them in large denominations, e.g., \$100, to avoid paying extra check fees. Although cash is readily exchangeable in Thailand, it has a lower exchange rate and you run the risk of losing it through petty theft. Bring just enough cash for your trip over and to get back home.

**Participants say...**  
Bring an ATM card.  
Traveler's checks are very hard to get cashed if you live on campus.  
The bulk of my money went to visiting touristy sites and beaches that were more expensive. Bring more than you think you'll spend; it's better to have more than not enough.

## Personal checks

Past participants who have run short of funds have had family members send them a check, but the check cashing process is complicated and time consuming taking at least 45 days to clear.

## Banking

You can open a bank account and use an ATM card to access money. For simplicity's sake, however, try to estimate your financial needs accurately, and bring enough traveler's checks or credit cards to cover.

## MEDICAL FACILITIES

If students become sick or are involved in an accident, they should immediately contact the staff in charge. The program driver will take you to a private hospital in Khon Kaen where typically staff will arrange a way for the staff in charge, the doctor, and you to discuss your

condition, to make sure nothing is lost in translation. If in emergency, we suggest that students go to the hospital listed below or to the University and Regional Hospital. Both accept credit cards.

*Khon Kaen Ram Hospital,*  
(Rongpayaban Khon Kaen Ram)  
193 Srijan Rd, Amphur Muang,  
Khon Kaen 40000

Tel: 043-333900, ext. 00, Fax: 043-333899

Note: If you tell them that you are a CIEE student, they will give you a 10% discount.

*Srinakharin Hospital*  
(University Hospital)  
Located on campus

Our past participants have said that it's not too bad of an idea to have dental work done in Thailand, especially if you do not have dental insurance back home. There are a number of dental clinics in the *lang maw* area.

Most of the doctors and dentists speak excellent English and our resident staff will be able to refer students to professionals who have worked with CIEE participants in the past. Further information will be provided during orientation.

## GETTING AROUND

### Local Transportation

Public transportation is cheap and easily available in many forms in Khon Kaen city. The main form of transport between the university and the city are songthaews, small passenger trucks that run on fixed routes. These trucks run frequently from about 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. After that, *tuk-tuks* (small motorized rickshaws) can be hired around town. Female students are advised to avoid *tuk-tuks* after dark. Also Khon Kaen University is now providing the free shuttle bus service for a short ride with in the campus.

### Independent Travel

To be frank, you should not expect too much time to do independent traveling during the course of the program. Depending on the semester, there may be a few short breaks, or one longer break, but most of your time outside of that—even the weekends, will probably need to be dedicated to fulfilling the requirements of the program.

However, it is a wonderful idea to travel before or after the program, if you can. Before leaving the

United States, gather as much information as possible about places you may want to visit. Of course, this may require additional funds.

### Participants say...

Be forewarned about the limited free time. You are always on the move!

Be prepared to spend a lot of time on a bus. If you're prone to motion sickness, pack Dramamine!

Look in your CIEE acceptance materials for locations of National Tourism Board of Thailand offices. Other sources that may be helpful are the various *Michelin Guides* and the *Lonely Planet* series.

Traveling independently during the program is a privilege that you should not abuse. You must strictly adhere to the following ground rules or risk the suspension of independent travel rights:

- 1) Classroom attendance is mandatory and students may not miss classes in order to travel independently. Independent travel is only allowed on free weekends, breaks, and after the end of the program.
- 2) Students should not plan to travel to regions of Thailand where transportation is unreliable or scarce. The Resident Director has final authority over the appropriateness of all travel plans.
- 3) Students must inform the Resident Director in advance if they are planning to leave Khon Kaen. This is important not only for the smooth operation of the program but also to ensure the safety of the students in the event of accidents or emergencies.
- 4) Students are responsible for all costs associated with independent travel.

Plan to travel in twos or threes so that you can easily meet others, find places of accommodation and assist each other if needed. Solo travel for inexperienced travelers and females is not recommended.

### Leaving the Country during the Program is prohibited

Due to the nature of the educational visa that you will be on while in Thailand, you may not leave the country during the duration of the program. Any traveling outside the country should be done after the program ends.

### Modes of Travel for Long Distance

Please refer to your guidebook to get in depth information about traveling in Thailand.

## VOTING WHILE ABROAD

U.S. citizens who expect to be away from home on Election Day may request absentee ballots in person or by mail from their local election offices. Procedures vary by state but are usually quite simple if you have already registered to vote.

If you have not arranged this before leaving home, you may use the provisions of the Overseas Voting Rights Act of 1975 that requires states to establish a means for citizens residing overseas to apply for voter registration. Some states permit you to use an FPCA (Federal Post Card Application) to register. Others use an SF76 that serves as both an application for registration and as an absentee ballot. You can get a list of states' voting requirements from a U.S. Embassy or consular office.



### **Tip: Notarize your ballot**

FPCA forms used to register or obtain a ballot must be notarized. If you believe you have been wrongfully denied the right to vote, you may write to the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Washington, D.C. 20530.

If you are a citizen of another country, consult the authorities governing elections in your own country for similar instructions before you leave.

## INCOME TAX

Most U.S. citizens and residents must file U.S. income tax returns even if their earned income is exempt from taxes. State requirements vary; call or write to the appropriate state office.

Internal Revenue Service income tax information and forms are available at U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Since tax laws change from year to year, direct any questions to the U.S. Consulate. Non-U.S. citizens should contact the appropriate authorities in their own countries for taxation information.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of an emergency, parents or family can reach you by calling CIEE. The CIEE office is in daily contact with our Khon Kaen office.

Contact information for the CIEE home office will be included in an electronic final mailing to both you and the emergency contact designated in your application materials.

### **Participants say...**

Being in Thailand opened up my eyes and made clearer what I want to do with my life. I was able to meet people who can help me with my goals in working in Laos or Thailand.

## Part IV: Policies and Procedures

Please click on the following link to view CIEE's Policies and Procedures:

<http://ciee.org/study/terms.aspx>.

This website includes:

### **General Policies**

- Admissions
- Late Arrival and Early Departure
- Exceptions
- Drug and Alcohol Violations
- Alcohol Policy
- Dismissal from the Program

### **Academic Policies**

- Student Academic Orientation
- Course Loads, Credits, Equivalencies and Grades
- Academic Records
- Attendance
- Pass/Fail and Audit
- Drop/Add Period
- Incompletes
- Withdrawal from a Course
- Academic Honesty
- Appeals

### **Program Fees and Payment Policies**

- Confirmation of Participation
- Payment of CIEE Program Fees
- Due Dates, Late Fees and Interest
- Exclusion from Participation
- Late Fees and Interest
- Withdrawal and Deferral Policy
- Program Cancellation

Please make sure to review this website. Your signature on the "Program Participant Contract" indicates that you have read and agree to comply with all of the policies provided to you on that website.

## A NOTE FROM CIEE

### **Credits and Grades**

Most students who choose to go abroad for a term or a year report that the experience is one of the most powerful and enjoyable parts of their undergraduate education. We hope that when you return home, you will have had an equally memorable experience.

Many students report that study abroad is also challenging, and that coming to terms with the challenges is one of the things that make it so powerful and memorable. Some students, however, report that the challenges of dealing with another country's academic culture are sometimes more frustrating than enjoyable.

The academic programs that CIEE provides are to varying degrees integrated into another culture's academic framework, and are often governed by rules that are unfamiliar to U.S. students. At CIEE we want you to experience the challenges of adapting to a new culture, of accepting different teaching styles, and embracing forms of learning that may be different from what you are used to.

But we are sure you will agree that problems associated with your credits and your grades should be avoided—that these should not turn out to be “opportunities for growth.” We want to help you avoid these problems, and with some careful planning and attention to detail, you can:

### **1. Managing Your Registration.**

You are probably going to sign up for five classes during your session overseas. Although it's surprising, one problem faced by some students when they return home is that the Course Registration Record we have for them doesn't match what the student actually took. You can avoid this. Read on.

#### **Make it your responsibility to keep your Course Registration Record accurate and up to date.**

Students select a preliminary course schedule, either in the U.S. before going abroad or after arrival at the Center. The courses selected constitute your Preliminary Registration, which will be sent to your home or sending school. There will be an opportunity to change courses during the first days of the regular semester (the “drop-add” period). Once this add-drop period ends, all courses for which you are registered will remain final, and will be permanently listed on your Course Registration Record. These will be the courses that will appear on the credit and grades report that we will send to your home or sending school after the session ends (called the “CIEE Academic Record”).

Although CIEE staff, both in the U.S. and at your site, will make every effort to ensure that your Course Registration Record is accurate, we cannot do this unless you correctly follow all the

formal procedures for making changes. **You must fill out a form to drop or add a course.** It is not sufficient to tell your professor, the CIEE Resident Director, or another staff person that you are changing courses—you must complete all required paperwork or the change is not official. In some cases you will also be required to obtain permission from your home institution.

To sum up, **make it your responsibility** to ensure that your Course Registration Record is accurate. If at any time you are not sure, ask to see a copy of it.

#### **There's a difference between DROPPING a course and WITHDRAWING from one.**

As noted above, once the drop-add period is over, all the courses for which you are registered will remain permanently on your record. However, if you realize, *after the end of the drop-add period but before the middle of the session*, that special circumstances will prevent you from completing a course successfully, it may be possible to “Withdraw” from the course. Please also be aware that it is not possible to add a course after the add-drop period. If you do withdraw from a course, it will remain on your CIEE Academic Record with a “W” grade. Permission to Withdraw from a course is not automatically granted just because a student is not doing well; it is only granted when there are circumstances that the Resident Director believes *prevented* a student from doing well, and *only before the program's withdrawal deadline*. There is also required paperwork to complete if you are withdrawing from a course.

After the withdrawal deadline, all courses that remain on your Course Registration Record will be posted on your CIEE Academic Record with a letter grade. If you stop going to a course, fail to take the final examination, or fail to turn in required coursework, you will receive an F.

### **2. Getting Good Grades.**

#### **The time to think about your grades is at the beginning of each course, not at the end.**

Make sure you understand the basis on which the professor will be assessing your work. Practices vary from country to country. Often a single final paper or examination will be the most important (perhaps the only) opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned and/or achieved in the course. In some courses, the basis for grades may have been explained during orientation or during the registration

process. An explanation may appear on the course syllabus, and/or the professor may announce grading policies. In some cases, you may not be sure how the professor will be calculating the grade. In this case as well, **make it your responsibility to be sure you understand the basis for grading in each course.** If you're not sure, ask the professor or the Resident Director.

### **How am I doing?**

Although grading differs from country to country, there are general guidelines that we can offer.

In the U.S., a student usually forms an idea of how he/she is doing as the semester progresses based on a self-appraisal of participation in class and a general sense of what the professor cares about. In most overseas situations, it is much more difficult, and often not possible at all, for a student to determine this. Although we ask our teachers to give students ongoing feedback, their own academic cultures are often very different in this regard, and many teachers do not always offer feedback in a way that enables a student to form a reliable opinion of his/her progress. We strongly recommend that you ask your professor how you are doing, perhaps two weeks after the semester has started and again two or three times during the session. Don't wait until mid-term time to do this.

### **“Demanding” doesn’t mean the same thing in most overseas academic cultures.**

U.S. students are accustomed to forming an idea of how demanding a teacher is based on the pressure that is applied on a day-to-day basis. In the U.S., if a professor repeatedly challenges students to show they have read and understood the assignments, and then chastises those who can't answer, students will conclude that this is a demanding teacher. This doesn't always happen overseas. “Demanding” in an overseas context may mean simply that the grades awarded at the end of the course are lower than those awarded by other professors.

Because of these differences, you need to take stock of your situation early and often. If the regular clues are not present, you should ask, “How am I doing?” If there isn't yet any basis for the professor to answer that question, you should ask, “What is important in this class? What should I be doing in order to succeed?” Make it your responsibility to actively seek

confirmation of how well you are doing in each course.

All the CIEE staff, both in the U.S. and at your program site, want you to have an enjoyable and successful session overseas. We are committed to offering top-quality assistance to help you understand the host culture and its constraints. Please do not hesitate to contact any staff member if we can advise you on how best to manage your overseas experience.

Have a great year, learn all that you can about your temporary home, and try to bring back an excellent and accurate academic record.

## **CONCLUSION: THE CHALLENGE IS UP TO YOU**

Your stay abroad may be one of the most vital and rewarding times of your life. Don't worry about what you are going to miss at school by going overseas. You will learn so much abroad! The people you meet and the situations you experience may be invaluable in the years to come.

We hope you will arrive prepared to adjust to a way of living that is different from your own; to a way of thinking that may be, in some cases, more traditional, more conventional, and more conservative than your own. You will also most likely encounter new and different views about the U.S. and its people. Take the opportunity to learn from these and to clarify misconceptions about the U.S. when you can.

Remember that each person you meet will see you as a representative of the United States. If you can accept differences cheerfully and with an open mind rather than attempting to alter the environment around you, you can contribute to a positive relationship between the country and the United States.

### **CIEE wishes you every success during the coming months.**

#### **Participants say...**

Overall my experience abroad is something that I would not trade for anything. Being abroad gave me the opportunity to push myself beyond my comfort zone thus increasing my abilities to deal with more confidence. My only advice to those coming abroad is to constantly push yourself. Venture out on your own and don't let your fears deprive you of the opportunity to try something new.

## Part V: Additional Resources

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### SUGGESTED READING LIST

We urge you to read several of these publications to expand your knowledge of Thailand and ease your adjustment to Thai culture. Many of these books can be purchased at your local bookstore or may be available for reference at your campus study abroad office or local library.

Baker, Chris, and Phongpaicit, Pasuk. A History of Thailand. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Bello, Walden, et al. A Siamese Tragedy: Development and Disintegration in Modern Thailand. (Food First, 1999).

Botan, [pseud.]. Letters from Thailand. Bangkok: D.K. Book House, 1977.

Connors, Michael Kelly. Democracy and National Identity in Thailand. Copenhagen: NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2007.

Cooper, Robert and Nanthapa. Culture Shock! Thailand. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, 1990.

Ockey, James. Making Democracy: Leadership, Class, Gender, and Political Participation in Thailand. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

O'Reilly, James and Habegger, Larry, eds. Travelers Tales: Thailand. San Francisco: Travelers Tales, 1993.

Peleggi, Maurizio. Thailand: The Worldly Kingdom. London: Cromwell Press, 2007.

Sudham, Pira. Monsoon Country. A novel about Northeast Thailand. Bangkok: Shire Books, 1988.

Winichakul, Thongchai. Siam Mapped. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

### Books On Cultural Adaptation

Adaptation to a new culture can be difficult. The following reading list contains publications that deal specifically with issues of culture shock and the difficulties associated with living overseas. Many of these books can be purchased at your local bookstore or may be available for reference at your campus study abroad office or local library.

- Citron, James. Short-Term Study Abroad: Integration, Third Culture Formation and Reentry, NAFSA: Association for International Educators, 1996.
- Kepets, Dawn. Back in the USA: Reflecting on Your Study Abroad Experience, NAFSA: Association for International Educators, 1999.
- Kohls, Robert. Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad, Intercultural Press, 2001.
- Storti, Craig. The Art of Crossing Cultures (Second Edition), Intercultural Press, 2001.
- Storti, Craig. The Art of Coming Home, Intercultural Press, 2001.
- Wolfgang, Aaron. Everybody's Guide to People Watching, Intercultural Press, 1995.

## WEBSITES

For those students with access to the Internet, we also encourage you to look at the many sites on student travel as well as on Thailand and Khon Kaen including the following:

Where	Description
<a href="http://www.ciee.org/isp">www.ciee.org/isp</a>	CIEE's web site. If you haven't already, take a look and find out about other CIEE activities around the world.
<a href="http://www.kayak.com">www.kayak.com</a> <a href="http://www.sidestep.com">www.sidestep.com</a> <a href="http://www.travelocity.com">www.travelocity.com</a> <a href="http://www.expedia.com">www.expedia.com</a>	For a link to travel information on tickets, travel gear, and other interesting information for the travelers.
<a href="http://www.travel.state.gov">www.travel.state.gov</a>	The U.S. State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs home page providing Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, U.S. Passport Information and Application Procedures, U.S. Consulate and Embassy Addresses Abroad, and U.S. Customs Information.
<a href="http://www.dcb.com">www.dcb.com</a> <a href="http://www.oanda.com">www.oanda.com</a>	Current exchange rates.
<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>	U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Provides updated information on required immunization and regional health advisories for travelers.
<a href="http://www.kku.ac.th">www.kku.ac.th</a>	Khon Kaen University
<a href="http://www.lonelyplanet.com">www.lonelyplanet.com</a>	On-line travel guide to Thailand from the very respected <i>Lonely Planet</i> series of travel guides.

Additionally, the Overseas Studies Office at the University of Southern California (USC) maintains an extensive web site with a number of relevant links under topics including cross cultural information, currency conversion/money abroad, financial aid, government sites, health and safety issues, insurance, passports and visas, phone codes and time zones, weather and transportation. This site can be found at: [www.usc.edu/dept/overseas/links.html](http://www.usc.edu/dept/overseas/links.html)

## SUGGESTED PACKING CHECKLIST

Naturally you'll want to pack what best reflects your own life style and taste, but CIEE recommends the following:

### *Important Documents*

- Airline Ticket (save return ticket if it's a round-trip ticket)
- CIEE Student Handbook and pre-departure materials
- Credit card/ATM card (remember your PIN)
- International Student Identity Card (if purchased)
- Passport/photocopy of passport (keep in separate places)
- Traveler's checks for emergencies (keep list of check numbers separate)
- Vaccination Card

### *Clothing*

- Athletic Shoes (old pair, they will get wet and dirty)
- Bras (9)
- Sport sandals you can get wet like Chacos or Tevas
- Sweatshirt or long-sleeved shirt
- Pajamas (1)
- Pants/capris (3-4)
- Hat
- Rain jacket
- Shirts (7)
- Blouse(s) (1-2)
- Shorts (knee length or longer 3)
- Skirts/dresses (long 1-2)
- Socks (5)
- Swimsuit (one piece recommended)
- Underwear (10)

### *General*

- Address Book with e-mail addresses
- Backpack/Overnight bag for traveling
- Pictures from home to show friends
- Camera and film
- Flashlight
- Extra towel
- Small towel
- Glasses or contact lenses, extra pair, prescription
- Guidebook
- Insect repellent (if you prefer DEET, >20% is recommended)
- Journal (can buy in Thailand)
- Medication you are taking and a copy of the prescription
- Medicine kit, small: anti-diarrhea medicine, pain reliever, band-aids, vitamins, laxative
- Reading material: books, magazines
- CDs or something to do in the van
- Sun block/screen
- Sunglasses
- Nalgene bottle
- Tampons/[www.thedivacup.com](http://www.thedivacup.com)/[www.thekeeper.com](http://www.thekeeper.com)
- Travel alarm clock
- Insect bite cream
- Small pocket knife (Do not bring in carry-on luggage)
- Sewing kit (optional)
- Ear plugs (optional)
- Portable tape recorder (optional)

### Packing Tips from past participants:

- Don't bring any valued clothing, things get stained and they don't come out very well
- It is a good idea to bring pens from the U.S. because they might have higher quality.
- Phone calls to the U.S. are difficult to make from Khon Kaen. Buy a calling card before you leave and give it to whomever you are expecting to communicate with by phone. Calling cards from the U.S. won't work here. Also, if you have a dual-band cell phone with a SIM card, you can buy one here and call home with it.
- Don't bring tank tops, tight clothes or short shorts because they're not appropriate dress in Thailand and the number of times you'll be able to wear them are few.
- Thailand is hot, no matter what time of year you come. Bring clothes that breathe, you'll be more comfortable. Clothing that is quick dry is also recommended.
- As a general travel rule, don't bring anything you can't afford to lose unless you really need it. Also, don't bring too much stuff, you'll regret it.
- Don't bring a bunch of toiletries you can buy them all here, even most American brands (except tampons).
- You can wait to buy: t-shirts, flip-flops/shower shoes, a robe, a towel in Thailand.
- Money: ATMs are the most convenient, most people find relying solely on traveler's checks a pain because you have to go to the bank to cash them. Credit cards aren't taken very many places around campus, usually only at places where you're spending more money. Visa and Master Card are recommended.
- There is a wireless network service for free around the office area. CSK also provide high speed internet at 18 baht/hour. Many people prefer to communicate via e-mail and instant message.
- Try to do a little reading about Thailand or other preparation before you come, it will only add to your experience.
- Keep in mind that on average, Thais are smaller than Americans so if you think you're bigger than most Thais, don't plan on buying shoes and clothes here (ex. Larger than size 8 shoe for women and size 10 for men).
- Don't buy Malaria pills before you come; they are MUCH cheaper in Thailand.
- Camera-you can bring digital camera without much of a problem, there is a place in downtown Khon Kaen where they will put your photos onto a CD, however, more than one card is recommended and the bigger the card the better.
- Bring your glasses prescription, eyeglasses are cheaper in Thailand.
- Bring an adaptor for plug-in electronics and rechargeable batteries for electronics like a Discman.
- Bedding is provided.