

UW Agriculture, Health & Nutrition in Uganda – Winter Intercession 2025-26 Study Abroad Program Handbook

UW Agriculture, Health & Nutrition in Uganda is offered by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in partnership with International Academic Programs (IAP). This Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive from your field instructor as well as the Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to your relationship with your host university or academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to your Study Abroad Advisor or Program Leader.

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Contact Information

UW Madison Program Leaders

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On-Site Program Information

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UW-Madison Information

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Emergency Contact Information

For questions or general concerns that do not involve the immediate danger or threat to the health or safety of a student, call the main IAP number **(608) 265-6329** between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Calls received outside normal operating hours will be returned as soon as possible the next business day.

If an emergency arises after-hours or on weekends, you can reach the IAP Staff On-Call at **(608) 516-9440**. This number is **ONLY for emergencies**, otherwise, please call the main desk.

Embassy Registration

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at travelregistration.state.gov. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country's embassy or consulate.

U.S. Embassy in The Republic of Uganda
Plot 1577 Ggaba Road
P. O. Box 7007
Kampala, Uganda
Attn: Consular Section
Phone: + 256 (0) 414 306 001
Email: KampalaUScitizen@state.gov
ug.usembassy.gov/

It is highly recommended that students register with the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) and download the free mobile app. This is a free service that allows U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or

Consulate. Sign up for the STEP program at <https://step.state.gov/step/>. This program will benefit students by:

- Providing important information from the Embassy about real-time and country-specific safety information
- Maintaining contact with the U.S. Embassy in case of a natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency
- Establishing an efficient way for friends and family to maintain contact in emergency situations

Program Dates

Arrival date: Sunday, January 4th, 2026 (depart U.S. on Saturday, January 3rd)

Departure date: Saturday, January 17th, 2026 (after dinner)

Preparation Before Leaving

Refer to the Pre-Departure Checklist in the Study Abroad Handbook for essential information.

Immigration Documents

Passport

A passport is needed to travel to Uganda and to obtain your visa. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website (travel.state.gov/passport). If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least 6 months beyond the length of your stay abroad.

Visa

A visa is required for U.S. passport holders on this program. U.S. passport holders can obtain information and details from the U.S. Department of State at

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Uganda.html>.

The State Department advises that visas are not available at Entebbe Airport upon arrival. Airlines have been informed to deny boarding to passengers traveling to Uganda unless they can show proof of approval for a visa. It is your responsibility to apply, pay for and receive your visa BEFORE you depart the United States. Your Program Leaders, James Ntambi and John Ferrick, will work with you during the fall semester pre-departure course to make sure that you are aware of the steps to apply for your visa.

Students who are U.S. passport holders are advised to apply for a single-entry ordinary tourist visa for the program, unless they have personal travel plans that require multiple entries to Uganda. Students are not able to apply for a “student pass” as they are not admitted to a Ugandan university. For the ordinary tourist visa, there is a fee of \$50.00.

Please visit <https://visas.immigration.go.ug/> to begin the e-visa application process. Ugandan e-visas are valid for 90 days from the date of issue, so it's important not to begin the process too early. You will need to upload a copy of your passport information page (the page with your name, photo, etc.), a passport-sized photo (you can get passport-sized photos taken at the Wiscard office or most pharmacies such as Walgreens), and your yellow fever vaccination certificate. For the proof of vaccination, please provide an International Certificate of Vaccination (ICV) for yellow fever. To learn more about the yellow fever vaccination or to locate a vaccination clinic, please visit the CDC's [yellow fever resource page](#).

Use Mr. Ron Nsimbe's contact information (provided at the beginning of this handbook) for your on-site contact as needed. Again, select tourism as your reason for travel as you are not enrolled in a Ugandan university. Your point of entry should be Entebbe if you are traveling with the group. You should also submit the \$50 application payment. You should receive confirmation that your application has been submitted shortly after you complete it online. This is the first step, but not all.

Next, your application is processed. Any change in the status of your application will be sent to the email that you entered in your application. These communications can be also checked through the Uganda electronic Visa/Permit website in "[Manage your application](#)" under "Applications" from the main menu on the e-visa site. To manage your application, you'll need to enter that application ID number, passport number, and birthdate.

Once your application has been processed, you should get an approval letter, sent by email or downloaded through the Uganda electronic Visa/Permit website. This letter establishes that you are eligible for the approved visa or permit. The barcode on the approval letter will be used for accessing your application at Entebbe, so bring the printed letter with you in your carry-on. This will speed up the final approval process.

Completion of the process takes place at Entebbe airport. The e-visa process grants you permission to enter Uganda, then upon arrival to Uganda (at the selected point of entry), you will be inspected by an Immigration Officer who will determine if your application is finally approved. If you have any questions about the visa process as you are completing it, please contact your Study Abroad Advisor.

Handling Money Abroad

The Ugandan shilling is the legal currency in Uganda. The Uganda shilling is divided into denominations of 1000, 2000, 5000, 10,000, 20,000 and 50,000 for paper notes, while coins are in the denominations of 50, 100, 200, 500 for coins. In Kampala, there are a number of ATMs where you can withdraw cash from your U.S. bank. There is usually a conversion/convenience fee charged by your bank. Please contact your bank in advance to ascertain the international fees for ATM and credit card use, as well as informing them you will be using your card abroad. Request a PIN for your credit cards in the event of an emergency. The PIN can only be delivered by mail, so request several weeks in advance.

Be prepared to barter with locals for goods sold by vendors outside a shopping mall or similar structure. This is a common practice. During the initial orientation onsite, you will be given estimates of what various goods should cost. Very few facilities accept credit cards, and there are usually additional fees to use them. Credit card use is not advised because so few facilities accept them outside of Kampala.

Travelers are encouraged to obtain U.S. dollar bills newer than 2006 (and that look newer also—not torn or wrinkled) for the best exchange rate. Older or torn bills may not be accepted at money changing stations. Small denominations (\$20, \$10, \$5, \$1, and coins) also fetch low value on the Ugandan market. If you bring U.S. dollars to change to Ugandan shillings, it's important to bring \$50 and \$100 bills for the best exchange rates.

Packing & Clothing

Note: Short, tight, or revealing clothes should be avoided. Women should wear skirts or dresses that are knee-length or longer, and tank-tops/t-shirts should be modest, with wide straps and no cleavage showing.

Laundry facilities are available at the Lweza Guest House.

The items below were suggested by past participants:

- Walking shoes (sandals are okay for free time; closed-toe during program), socks
- Women should bring multiple knee length or longer skirts that are loose fitting (for the hospital days, avoid wearing floor-length skirts as they may collect dirt and germs from the wards).
- Women can bring capris to wear on free days, but must wear skirts on other days
- Tops/blouses with sleeves. Tops should not be low-cut; cap-sleeves are fine. Sleeveless tops/tank tops are not culturally appropriate in Uganda.
- Men will need collared shirts and ties during professional program activities (short-sleeves okay)
- Pajamas
- Hat, if desired
- Personal toiletries
- Towel, wash cloth (made of quick-dry material)
- Water bottle
- Meal substitute snack bars (e.g., PowerBar, Luna Bar) and other snacks
- Tissues/TP
- Hand sanitizer/wipes
- Sunglasses
- Prescribed and over-the-counter medications (in original container with documentation of prescription)
- Prophylactic medication as prescribed by your primary care provider to prevent travel-related diseases such as Malaria
- Medications that you occasionally need, just in case (medication for rashes, urinary tract infections, ibuprofen, Pepto-Bismol, allergies, etc.)

- Small plastic bags: Women may want to bring these for discrete hygiene product disposal as bathrooms may not have trash cans and tampons cannot be flushed.
- Re-hydration salts
- Sunscreen/lip balm
- Insect repellent, Permethrin spray, DEET insect repellent
- Small amount of detergent, string for clothesline
- Backpack or messenger bag that you can keep close to you
- Waist or neck pouch for passport
- Travel book
- Luggage locks (must be TSA approved)
- Headlamp or small flashlight
- Camera
- Photocopies of all documents, credit cards, passports, air travel itinerary

Avoid Bringing:

- Valuables, items with great sentimental value
- Jeans (they are heavy and take a long time to dry)
- Camouflage or military-style clothing
- Do not bring pepper spray or any similar self-defense tool with you when traveling abroad. While pepper spray or similar self-defense items are legal in the United States, they are illegal to possess and carry in many other countries.

Electronics This will be discussed in your pre-departure orientation.

Travel and Arrival Information

A more complete itinerary will be provided at the pre-departure orientation. Students will make their own travel arrangements, but are given guidelines for arrival routes, dates and times to coordinate with other program participants. Students will be picked up at the Entebbe airport and all in-country travel is arranged by program staff.

The Academic Program

Course Information

This course and study abroad program are approved as a field experience for the Global Health Certificate. Students must be enrolled in InterAg 321, during fall 2023 semester in order to be eligible to participate in the study abroad component of the program. They will be given permission to enroll in the course once accepted into the Uganda winter program. This course meets Wednesdays from 3:30 - 5:00. Students will earn 1 Credit of InterAg 321 during the fall and 2 credits of Nutritional Sciences 421 while abroad, which counts towards Spring semester enrollment.

Field Study

Be aware that a field study can be stressful for many reasons. Students are away from the comfort and familiarity of home/campus and this might be uncomfortable. Students will meet local individuals and will face language barriers and cultural differences. As a field study participant, students will be expected to be a team member. Students will be with the same travel mates for days, evenings, and even nights as they share bus rides, meals in restaurants, and overnights in hotels or local homestays. Please anticipate these challenges and be ready to address them with respect and grace. On-site staff and leaders are there to help students with difficult situations, to encourage open conversations, and to build greater understanding.

During a field study, students visit many sites, oftentimes multiple in one day. At many of these sites, the people students interact with have typically volunteered their time to teach about their business / culture / country. It is essential to remain respectful and considerate with everyone you meet throughout the program. Keep in mind that each site offers firsthand experiences and opportunities to learn about the local people, culture, and programs.

Most importantly, though, a field study provides opportunities to build connections between both participants and locals. Students are challenged to think outside the box and oftentimes quickly make decisions. Being proactive and deliberate during site visits can help students feel more connected to their program and local culture, especially considering the short duration. The rewards of a field study are only limited by what the student can achieve, so we encourage every participant to embrace their unique experience.

Living Abroad

City/Site Specific Information: Students will be primarily visiting the cities of Mukono, Masindi, and Ndere.

Housing: Students will stay at the Lweza Guesthouse in the community. Students share rooms and bathrooms. All beds have bed nets and there is internet available via Wi-Fi. Internet access and telephone service are quite expensive in Uganda. Students are responsible for their own costs associated with accessing the internet or making international phone calls. Students have the option of renting their own mobile Wi-Fi hotspot through companies such as Xcom Global or possibly through their mobile phone provider. We recommend you look into this before departure. We also recommend you limit your internet usage while on your field study to better engage with the local culture and your classmates. Let your families and friends know in advance that you may not be in touch on a regular basis during your program.

Transportation: All in-country travel is arranged by program staff. The group will travel on a program bus to the various program sites, and participants should be prepared for some long bus rides.

The main mode of transportation while in Uganda is walking, public taxis called *mutatus*, and vehicles for private hire. Bring adequate walking shoes. Although motorcycle taxis called *boda*

bodas are abundant in Kampala, they are very dangerous and the cause of many serious accidents and fatalities. Students are advised not to use this form of transportation while participating in the field course.

Safety:

While Uganda is generally safe, crimes such as pick-pocketing, purse snatching, and thefts from hotels and parked vehicles do occur. Pick-pocketing and the theft of purses and bags is common on public transportation. The U.S. Embassy states that American citizens visiting Uganda are advised not to accept food or drink offered from a stranger, even a child, because such food may contain narcotics used to incapacitate a victim and facilitate a robbery.

Adopting the proper mindset is essential to avoid crime; security takes advance planning and routine discipline and is incumbent upon everyone. To reduce the risk of crime, keep belongings close, be aware of surroundings, and never walk alone at night. Personal security measures should be adhered to at all times. You are urged to maintain good situational awareness while in Uganda. Do not walk alone at night. Walk in a group, or at least in pairs. Avoid isolated areas. Maintain a low profile (clothing, behavior, speech, politics). Use extra caution when crossing the street. Minimize the amount of cash and number of credit cards you carry. Always have a plan for communication and a list of emergency contact information with you. Only give personal information to known and trusted persons. Let someone know about planned absences and means of contact.

Women

Please note that no matter where in the world women travel, they will generally be safer and more included in the culture if dressed appropriately for the norms of the locale. While conforming to the local standards of dress might contradict American values of individual self-expression and equality, adhering to local codes of conduct demonstrates respect for that culture. It is important for us to remember that we are guests in other countries. Although we may not fully understand the reasons for particular dress standards or other local customs, it is our responsibility to be courteous guests and represent our University and our country well.

The Ugandan Parliament passed a controversial anti-pornography bill in 2014 that defines pornography quite differently than commonly thought of in the U.S. Women should not wear clothes that reveal their thighs or cleavage; skirts should cover the knees and tops should cover the upper chest. Women may choose to wear pants, but these should definitely cover the knees. Additionally, please don't travel with any books/magazines that feature women in revealing (by Ugandan standards) clothing.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

In May 2023 Uganda signed an anti-LGBTQIA+ bill into law, further criminalizing homosexuality in the country. Homosexuality was already illegal in Uganda under a 1950s penal code that remains in force and prescribes jail for those found guilty of homosexual acts, but the new bill is one of the strictest of its kind in Africa.

Social acceptance of homosexuality remains low, and LGBTQIA+ individuals – or suspected LGBT individuals – could face harassment, imprisonment, or blackmail and violence. Individuals or organizations viewed as supporting LGBT rights also face harassment. The Embassy advises all LGBT U.S. citizens who are residents or visiting Uganda to exercise caution. For further information LGBT travel, please read the US Department of State's [LGBT Travel Information](#) page. The Advocate's Uganda page features recent LGBT-related news: [advocate.com/uganda](#).

If you identify as LGBT, study abroad staff are supportive of your identity and it is our hope that you feel comfortable discussing your identity with your Study Abroad Advisor and/or Program Leader. Other students on your program may also be people with whom to find support and reinforcement. We want you to be able to be true to yourself and your identity while abroad, but we also want you to be safe. Please visit IAP's website for students who identify as LGBT for additional resources: [studyabroad.wisc.edu/student-identity/lgbt-students/](#).

Health:

General health considerations for study abroad will be covered in a mandatory Health and Safety pre-departure session.

Evidence of yellow fever vaccination is required to enter Uganda.

If you are not covered by UHS care, please consult with your insurance company to see what clinics or healthcare providers with travel medicine specialties are covered. There are a number of travel clinics in Madison including:

Dean [deancare.com/medical-services/travel-medicine/](#) and
UW Health [uwhealth.org/travel-vaccinations/locations-and-maps/10381](#).

To learn more about travelers' health, please visit the CDC website: [cdc.gov/travel](#). You can view vaccine recommendations from the same page, scrolling down to the vaccinations link. On the top of the Vaccinations page, there is a link for specific country recommendations.

Malaria is prevalent in Uganda and all students are expected to take antimalarial prophylactic medications. Travelers who become ill with a fever or flu-like illness while traveling in a malaria-risk area and up to one year after returning home should seek prompt medical attention and tell a physician their travel history and what antimalarials they have been taking. For additional information on malaria, including protective measures, see the CDC Travelers' Health webpages at [cdc.gov/malaria/travelers/index.html](#).

Students are encouraged to drink large quantities of water and to bring oral rehydration packets as noted in the packing list above. Past students also recommend bringing snacks. Past students have reported that it may be difficult to find medication while in Uganda outside of Kampala. They have suggested bringing any medication that may be needed such as general over the counter medications, prescription medications, and any other medications used. Past students have noted that it is particularly hard to obtain medications for rashes, urinary tract infections, and yeast infections and have suggested that students bring these to Uganda if they are susceptible to these conditions.

Communication

You will want to check with your cellphone carrier to ask about international calling and data capabilities and how to avoid extra charges while abroad.

Skype, WhatsApp, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, or other online/app-based communication methods may be the best option for communication when connected to Wi-Fi.

If you do need to make a phone call while abroad, keep in mind time zone differences: (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock).

Country and city codes can be found online (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html).

Some of the following steps can vary if you are using a calling card, landline, or cell phone.

To call *from* an international country *to* the United States:

- Dial the country *exit* code for the country you are in. Oftentimes this is “00.”
- Dial the country *access* code for the country you want to reach. For the United States it is “+1” or “011.”
- Follow with the area code and the local number as normal.

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT INFORMATION/WEBSITES OF INTEREST

U.S. State Department Students Abroad site:

studentsabroad.state.gov/

UW-Madison International Academic Programs

studyabroad.wisc.edu

U.S. State Department:

travel.state.gov

Center for Disease Control

cdc.gov/travel/

Current exchange rates

oanda.com

Lonely Planet

lonelyplanet.com

Student Testimonials

The testimonials below are from past participants; they reflect various students’ experiences and are included to provide different perspectives. The Study Abroad Office does not endorse any specific view expressed in this section.

international.wisc.edu/cals-three-weeks-in-uganda/

“Visiting Uganda was a transforming experience. I feel like they gave more to me than I gave to them.”

“I can see myself pursuing study experiences and a future career that is much more based on global health. Although I had never before seen myself pursuing a health related field, I absolutely loved learning from a global health perspective, and I can see myself doing something much more impactful with my engineering degree on a global scale.”

“You'll be looked at because you are different, but this does not mean that you then know what it's like to be a minority in America.”

“Being a white American had a strong impact on my experience abroad. The lesson I learned from this was one I didn't necessarily expect to learn. It was a new experience for me to be looked at because of the color of my skin. However let me be clear, I did not experience racism in any way - that is very different.”

“This program was an incredible experience that allowed us to see many different sides of Uganda, while having fun and learning. It is special because it allows each student to focus on one area of their choice and learn a lot about that, but also to learn about other student's chosen areas... The Village Health Project is an amazing asset to the program and it was awesome to finally see the project's they do first hand.”

“Many Ugandans spoke and understood English, and in situations where they did not know English, we usually had a translator. However, I frequently had to remind myself to slow down when I was speaking, as my American accent could sometimes be challenging to understand. My advice for future students is to learn the Ugandan greetings and phrases, such as ‘thank you.’”

“A lot of people spent their money very early on and then didn't have enough money to spend by the end. At the end of the trip, we visited lots of local artists and organizations that were selling cool crafts. I would recommend saving a good amount of money for later. Also keep some money to tip the driver and guide at the end.”

“Start watching flights early so that you have an idea of what your airfare might cost and it then becomes easier to determine how much you need to save for the rest of the trip. Also...scholarships!!”