

Prague, Czech Republic - Czech U. of Life Sciences (CULS or CZU)

CALS Study Abroad Program Handbook

2026-2027

The exchange program in Prague, Czech Republic is offered by the College of Agricultural and Life Science (CALS) in partnership with International Academic Programs (IAP) in conjunction with Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CULS or CZU). This Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive from CULS 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 International Academic Programs at UW-Madison.

This program handbook contains the following information:

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Contact Information

On-Site Program Information

In addition to this handbook, information can also be found on the [Czech University of Life Science's webpage for incoming students](#).

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UW-Madison Information

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Emergency Contact Information

In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number **(608) 265-6329** on Mondays-Fridays, between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m (Madison/central time). If you have an emergency after-hours or on a weekend, call the IAP Emergency staff on call at **(608) 516-9440**.

Embassy Registration

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

All program participants who are U.S. citizens should register with the U.S. Embassy before departure as this can help in case of a lost passport or other incident. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country's embassy or consulate.

U.S. Embassy in Prague, Czech Republic
Tržiště 15
118 01 Praha 1
Tel: (+420) 257 022 000
Fax: (+420) 257 022 809
Web: <https://cz.usembassy.gov/>

Program Dates

CULS Academic Calendar

<https://www.czu.cz/en/r-9190-international-relations/r-14521-incoming-exchange-and-erasmus-students/r-20141-incoming-students-academic-year-2026-2027>

Welcome Week

Students must attend “[Welcome Week](#),” the orientation and enrollment sessions that take place one week before courses start. The program of events includes tours, talks and social events, an introduction to the Czech academic system requirements, information on registration and enrollment, and practical advice on living in Prague. You will have the opportunity to meet members of staff as well as fellow students.

Preparation Before Leaving

Refer to the [Personal Logistics](#) section of the UW Study Abroad Handbook for essential information.

Passport

A passport is required to travel to the Czech Republic and to obtain your student 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 (<http://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 semester abroad.

Visa

Participants are required to obtain a long-stay student visa for this program. More information about the visa process and the documents required for your application can be found in the Czech Republic Visa Guide in your MyStudyAbroad account. The Study Abroad Advisor for this program will provide guidance regarding the steps for obtaining a visa, but **it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to correctly complete all requirements and meet deadlines for the visa.**

Please note that the “Document confirming the reason for your stay” and the “Document confirming accommodation” will be provided by CULS’ International Office.

NOTE: The visa for the Czech Republic can take 60-70 days to process once the consulate receives your application, so it is very important that you begin your application immediately!

Handling Money Abroad

The Czech Republic’s currency is the Koruna (plural Koruny, meaning “crown” in Czech and symbolized by Kč or CZK). As of July 2026, the exchange rate was 21.22 Czech Koruny per 1 U.S. dollar. You should plan to withdraw some cash from an ATM upon arrival for incidental purchases, but most places accept credit/debit cards.

ATM/Debit Cards

ATMs are readily available in Prague and throughout the Czech Republic. There is an ATM on the ground floor of the university cafeteria. Before departure, notify your bank that you will be abroad and ask about any international charges you may incur from using ATMs abroad.

Packing

Pack light. You will be able to buy many things in the Czech Republic, as needed.

Some items that you may want to ensure you bring with you are:

- Electronic adaptors/converters (information below)
- Copies of your documents (passport, visa, CISI insurance information, emergency card, important phone numbers in case your phone is lost/stolen)
- A light, reusable grocery bag for carrying items when shopping
- If staying the campus residence halls, you will need to provide your own towels (as well as kitchen supplies – pots, pans, utensils, etc.) Kitchenware can be purchased in Prague, but previous students recommended bringing a towel so that you have that upon arrival.

Electronics: Electricity in Czech Republic is 230 Volts, alternating at 50 cycles per second. If you bring a device that does not accept 230 Volts at 50 Hertz, you will need a voltage converter. Outlets in Czech Republic generally accept the widespread European plug with two pins.

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 (e.g., Australia, Japan, United Kingdom).

Travel and Arrival Information

Buddy Program

Prior to arrival, CULS offers exchange students the opportunity to be part of the [Buddy Program](#), which connects CULS students with exchange students to help students get familiar with the campus and Prague. Your buddy might be able to meet you at the airport, depending on their availability. They're a great resource for any questions you have both before and during your time at CULS!

Getting from the Airport to the University

The [Czech University of Life Sciences website](#) has information about getting to campus. Instructions on this website start from the **Dejvická A** metro station, so you will need to make your way to that station before following instructions listed on their website.

Prague's main international airport, Václav Havel Airport Prague (formerly named Prague Ruzyně International Airport) is located 15 km west of the city center. There are several options for getting to CZU from the airport.

Getting from the Airport to CZU via Public Transportation:

Public transit tickets can be purchased at the airport in Terminal 1 and 2, or at ticket machines found in the airport. You will need to buy the Standard 90-minute ticket, which costs around 50 CZK (\$2.50). This ticket will cover your entire journey (bus and metro), so keep it close to you during the journey. Some tickets are pre-validated at time of purchase; others will need to be validated at the time of travel by inserting in a validation machine at the bus/metro entrance. Small luggage is included in the ticket. If you have larger luggage, you will need to purchase a ticket for your luggage as well. A luggage ticket is CZK 25, or about \$1.25. If you buy a luggage ticket, it will need to be validated at the same time as your passenger ticket.

1. Airport → to Nádraží Veveslavín station

Take **trolley bus** No. **59** brings passengers from the airport to **Nádraží Veveslavín** station. This ride is approximately 15-20 minutes.

2. Nádraží Veveslavín Station → Dejvická Station

Take **the metro line A** to **Dejvická Station**. Go in the direction towards "Skalka". You will take this two stops and the ride should be less than 5 minutes.

3. Dejvická Station → CZU Campus

At the Dejvická station, you'll get on the bus number **107** or **147** and travel to the bus stop called "**Zemědělská univerzita**". The stop is announced on the bus's announcement system, and you can also read it on the digital display inside the bus. This trip will take about 10 minutes.

Shuttle or Taxi:

CSA (Czech Airlines) operates an airport **shuttle bus** to and from its office in central Prague with the only stop on the way at **Dejvická** metro station in the suburb of Dejvice. It leaves every 30 minutes from 6:00 to 21:00. (Please note: if you wish to visit central Prague first, do not get off the bus at Dejvická but continue to its terminus at **Náměstí republiky**.)

Taxi is the most expensive, though fastest, way of getting to the university. If you choose to travel from the Airport to the university by taxi, **insist** that the taxi driver travels to Suchbøl via **Horoměřice** (it should cost around 350 CZK, or \$17-18). The other way is via Dejvická (Dejvice), it is much longer and costs about double! The recommendation from CZU is to refuse any driver who wants to go via Dejvice. Please read more information about taxis and rideshares in Prague in this handbook on page 11.

The Academic Program

Czech University of Life Sciences

The Czech University of Life Sciences (CULS) - Prague, known in Czech as *Česká zemědělská univerzita v Praze* (CZU), began as the Department of Agriculture, established in 1906, at the Czech Technical University. Currently, the university has 6 faculties: Faculty of Agrobiology, Food and Natural Resources, Faculty of Environmental Sciences and Forestry and Wood Sciences, Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Economics and Management, as well as a scientific and educational Institute of Tropics and Subtropics.

CULS is situated on a large and beautifully landscaped campus in a quiet and study-friendly environment. It is home to over 20,000 students, 20% of whom are international students. CULS has become one of the most popular higher education institutions in the Czech Republic.

Classes

Classes are offered in English in several “Faculties” within CULS. It is possible to combine courses from multiple faculties; however, students must choose a Faculty as their primary. This means you must take **at least 50%** of the selected courses from it. For example, three courses from the Faculty of Engineering, two courses from the Faculty of Forestry, and one course from the Faculty of Economics.

Faculty of Agrobiology, Food & Natural Resources
Faculty of Economics and Management
Faculty of Engineering
Faculty of Environmental Sciences
Faculty of Forestry & Wood Sciences,
Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences

Course Guide for incoming students for a list of available courses:

<https://www.czu.cz/en/r-9190-international-relations/r-14521-incoming-exchange-and-erasmus-students/r-20141-incoming-students-academic-year-2026-2027/r-20151-course-offer-26-27>

In this guide you can also find more information on each course, such as the professor, when the course is offered, course assessment methods, pre-requisites and more.

Equivalents and Course Equivalent Request (CER)

Each course you take abroad must be assigned a UW-Madison equivalent course in order for your grades and credits to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. To establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your study abroad courses, you will submit a Course Equivalent Request (CER) for each course that you take at CULS. Requests are made in your MyStudyAbroad account in the “Academic” section. Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process is available in the UW Study Abroad Handbook.

Class Schedules

Class schedules vary between departments and courses. Some courses are taught in a modular structure, meaning they meet for a longer period of time and more often during the week but do not last an entire semester. Other courses have shorter lectures throughout the whole semester.

Exams

Exams typically consist of combinations of written and oral assessments. Some courses may also have project evaluations and multiple-choice exams.

Note: CULS’ exam system is different than what you are used to in Madison. The exam period is long, and there are multiple opportunities to retake exams during that period. Students in the past have typically been able to take all of their exams earlier on in the exam period, but note that you will want to determine your exam schedule before arranging your departure from Prague.

See the academic calendar for the exam period dates. Your professors should be able to let you know the date/time of the exam at the start of the semester.

Credits

ECTS credits are a numerical value allocated to course units. They reflect the number of contact hours as well as the quantity of work each course unit requires in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a full year of academic studies at the institution.

The credit conversion scale is as follows:

ECTS Credits	UW-Madison Credits
2	1
2.5	2
3	2
4	2
5 or 5,5	3
6 or 6,5	3
7 or 7,5	4
8	4

Limits and Load

In ECTS, 30 credits typically represent the workload of a semester of study. Students are expected to be full-time students and therefore are must enroll in a full time course schedule. It is the student's responsibility to ensure correct registration of the equivalent of **12-18 UW-Madison credits**.

Pass/Fail/Drop/Audit

Please refer to the [IAP Study Abroad Handbook](#) for academic policies.

Most courses at CZU that are worth 4 ECTS credits or less are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. UW-Madison policy allows students on a study abroad program to take only **one course** as Pass/Fail. If a student elects to take courses that are worth 4 ECTS credits, **it is the student's responsibility to confirm with CZU whether their selected courses will be graded as P/F or given a letter grade** when they are completing their Learning Agreement. **Students may not have more than 1 course as pass/fail per semester.**

In addition, it is important to note that **Pass/Fail courses do not count toward degree requirements**, so you should consult with your academic advisor(s) and understand the pass/fail policies in your school/college before enrolling or declaring any course pass/fail.

Grades and Grade Conversions

Grades at CULS will be converted to UW-Madison grades using the following grading scale:

Czech Grade reported	ECTS Grade reported	UW-Madison Grade
1 (Vyborne – Excellent)	A	A

2 (Vel'mi Dobre – Very Good)	B	A
2 (Vel'mi Dobre – Very Good)	C	B
3 (Dobre – Good)	D	B
3 (Dobre – Good)	E	C
4 (Nevyhovel – Fail)	F	F

University Facilities

Study and Information Center

The Study and Information Center includes the university library, Department of Information and Publicity Matters, and Department of Computer Services.

Department of Physical Education

The Department of Physical Education provides sports facilities for students to use.

CULS farm at Lany

The main objective of the [CULS farm](#), founded in 1960, is to support university activities. The farm offers good conditions for educational purposes, for practical training of CULS students as well as for students from other agricultural schools and for the public. It participates in the research work of the CULS departments and faculties.

CULS Forest Establishment at Kostelec

The CULS Forest Establishment, initially established in 1935, cultivates about 8,671 hectares of forest and includes fishponds, facilities for the education of forestry students, and a castle. Besides routine forestry operations, its main role is to assist in the education of students of the Faculty of Forestry, to organize experimental work and to serve for demonstration purposes. Practical experience in fish farming is also provided to students of the faculties of Agrobiology, Food and Natural Resources and Forestry. The CULS Forest Establishment includes a castle at Kostelec, a greenery centre, a sawmill with storage capacity and a fish farm with 70 hectares of fishponds. In addition, a 12-hectare arboretum was also established in 1954.

Housing

Students typically choose to live in CZU-affiliated housing, though past students have also chosen to find their own apartments with other UW participants on the program, or Erasmus students who are also studying at CULS for the semester. If you plan on finding your own housing, please be wary of scams; we recommend against sending money or signing a contract before you have arrived and can verify the accommodations in-person. The Study Abroad office cannot assist in finding or vetting private apartments.

Recommendation from past UW participant on finding your own housing:

"Start searching early! Try to get in touch with people from the Erasmus Student Network for help with finding housing."

CULS University Dormitories

International students generally stay in either one of the on-campus dormitories (often, Dormitory JIH) or the External Dormitory West, which is located about 35 minutes by public

transport from campus. However, the number of rooms in the dormitories is limited and rooms are reserved on a first-come first-served basis, so students are encouraged to secure their accommodations early. You will receive additional information directly from CULS about campus accommodations.

Rooms in the on-campus dormitories and in the External Dormitory West include Single and Double (shared) rooms and include a bed(s), desk(s), shelves, wardrobe(s) a small entry hall and a kitchenette with a small refrigerator. Bathrooms are shared between two rooms. Bed linens, including sheets, a comforter and a pillow are provided; however, you must arrange for your own towels, dishes, pans, utensils and other kitchen supplies. All rooms also have internet access (for an extra fee), but do not have phones. Each dormitory has a laundry room with a washing machine that can be accessed with a key available at the dormitory's reception desk.

To check into the dorms, you will need to fill out some forms, your passport and two photographs. You will also be expected to pay the first month's rent, deposit and other fees at the time that you check in. The dorm offices are open from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm. If you arrive after office hours, you can still stay in your dorm room but will have to register the next day. Your dorm room will be available to you up to three days before the orientation begins and up to three days after the examination period ends.

Other Dormitories in Prague

There are other dorms in Prague. These are not affiliated with CZU, but are residence halls of other campuses. You could try to apply for accommodation on your own:

Dormitories of the Czech Technical University:

<https://www.suz.cvut.cz/en/dormitories>

Dormitories of Charles University:

<https://kam.cuni.cz/KAMEN-168.html>

Private Apartments

If you do not want to live in a dorm, you can choose to find your own accommodations. **If you choose to live in an apartment, you will have to make the arrangements yourself.** The Study Abroad Office cannot assist in finding or vetting private residences. We advise students to be aware of potential scams and advise against exchanging money before you are able to verify the accommodations yourself. Private apartments are considerably more expensive than renting a room in the dorms. [CZU provides guidance to international students about finding private accommodations here.](#)

Previous students have shared the following resources for finding apartments. Though students have used these websites previously, you will still want to thoroughly vet each potential residence.

- <http://www.apartment.cz/>
- <http://www.happyhouserentals.com/>
- <https://www.expats.cz/praguerealestate/?Nav>

- <https://www.bezrealitky.cz/vypis/nabidka-%20spolubydleni/byt/praha? token=ElbGLxpzweAxlaJiDPAFoLKFU-6TkDFI-PoXN1joXVU>

These housing resources are only in Czech, but you can use Google Translator or you may ask your CULS buddy for help translating these websites:

- <https://www.espolubydleni.cz/podnajem-spolubydlici/praha>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/spolubydlenipraha/about/>
- <https://www.chcispolubydlici.cz/spolubydleni-praha/cena-6000/>

Student Life

Dining on campus

Menza is the cafeteria on campus that serves lunch and dinner, and there are other small cafes and restaurants around campus.

The CZU student card can be reloaded with cash and has a good array of discounts at the dining halls on campus.

Erasmus Student Network

The [ESN](#) is a large organization on campus that helps welcome new international students to CZU. They organize trips and events throughout the semester, and past participants have said that it's a great way to meet new friends and people from around the world.

IAAS

The International Association of Students in Agriculture and Related Sciences is an organization bringing together students in agriculture, food, environmental science and related fields from universities in more than 40 countries all over the world. Members arrange various opportunities and events.

Sports

The [department of sports](#) promotes several associations including the CULS Football Club, Ski Club, Swimming Club, Basketball Club, Fitness Club, and Frisbee Club.

Transportation

Getting to/from Campus

If you choose to live in the university dormitories, you will be within walking distance of your classes. If you live in private housing further from campus, you can take a metro/bus or other mode of public transportation.

Public Transportation

Prague Public Transit Co. is the main public transportation operator in Prague and throughout the Czech Republic. Bus, metro and tram tickets are available as single-trip or as season tickets.

Recommendation from past UW participants:

"One of my favorite places to eat on campus is on the second floor of the PEF (economics building) cafe. They have food from other parts of the world and it's usually decent."

"The nearest big grocery store [to the dorms] is the 'kaufland'... take the 107 bus and there is a stop close to the entrance."

Season tickets include short term (24-hour, 3-day, 7-day, 15-day) options or long term (monthly, quarterly) options. **University students are given discounted rates for monthly and quarterly tickets.** Tickets are sold at Metro stations, newsagents, department stores, travel information centers, hotels, etc. and are also available from ticket vending machines located at many transport stops, although the vending machines only issue single-trip tickets.

However, previous students have shared that the most convenient way to purchase tickets is through the [PID litacka transport app](#). Tickets must be obtained prior to entering the transportation vehicle and must be validated by the validating machines at the transport stop.



Bus

Buses run daily between 4:30 am and midnight and night buses continue to run from 12:30 am to 4:30 am. On weekdays, buses generally run every 6 to 8 minutes during peak hours and every 10 to 20 minutes during non-peak hours. On Saturdays and Sundays, buses run every 15 to 30 minutes. Night buses run every half hour. There are 193 day bus lines, including school bus lines and regional lines, as well as 12 night bus lines (numbered 501 through 512).

Metro trains

Three metro lines, designated as lines A, B and C, run throughout the city. The metro runs daily from 5:00 am until midnight with a frequency of 2 to 3 minutes during peak hours on workdays. There are 50 stations located throughout the city, three of which are interchange stations.

Tram

Trams run daily between 4:30 am and midnight. The majority of trams run on average every 8 minutes in the early morning and afternoon hours on working days, 10 minutes in the mornings and 7.5 to 15 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays. There are also eight night trams (numbered 51 through 58) that run between 12:30 am and 4:30 am. The night trams run every half hour.

Rideshare

There are several rideshare services that operate in Prague, including Uber and Bolt.

Taxi

By law, taxis must have a yellow roof lamp with the word “taxi” on both front and back. Also, on the front door, there must be a black-and-white strip, car evidence number, business name and price information.

The following are some recommendations from CZU staff for using taxis in Prague:

- If the vehicle is not properly labeled, do not use it. It is better to order a taxi from a radio dispatch service. In cities the arrival of taxi is usually free and you can always track the car you used.

Recommendations from past UW participant on getting around Prague :

“Download the [PID litacka transport app](#) since it’s significantly better than Google Maps and will save you a lot of time.

“I would recommend using Bolt over Uber for ride sharing as it’s cheaper, more available, and has better drivers.”

- Before you get on, get informed about prices. Structure of price is usually the following – fee for getting on, price in Koruny per kilometer of ride and waiting in a traffic jam or on customer's request in Koruny per minute, other prices for additional services are possible. Price list and the license of the taxi driver must be displayed in front of the co-driver seat.
- Upon taking a customer, the taxi driver is obliged to turn on a taxi-meter which must have clearly legible display, visible from both the front and the back seats. If he does not turn it on saying for example that it is not functional, use another taxi.
- On the taxi-meter you should verify that price corresponds with the one shown on the price list.
- After the ride, the taxi driver is obliged to give you a bill printed from the taxi-meter where he adds the start point and the destination. If they offer only a handlettered bill, refuse it and do not pay.
- In case of difficulties, do not use the taxi, write down registration number, car identification mark and business name of the provider. With these you can address to transport authority in the region (in Prague contact the Prague City Hall) or to Consumers Defense Association of the Czech Republic.

Air

Czech Airlines and Smart Wings, the Czech Republic's lowcost airline, connect Prague with several major international destinations, including Amsterdam, Dublin, Madrid, London, Rome and more. Several other European-based airlines, including Ryanair, Sky Europe, and Easyjet, provide flights throughout Europe at a very cheap rate. The cheap flights allow access to almost all of Europe.

Health and Safety

Emergency Line: 112

[The CZU website provides information about local emergency and hospitals.](#)

There is an on-campus medical centre and a good student medical center in the suburb of Dejvice, not too far from the campus. The International Relations Office can help arrange an appointment with an English speaking doctor.

Overall, Prague is a safe and enjoyable city with very little violent crime. Tourists are an easy target for pickpockets in Prague. This type of crime is the biggest problem in Prague. Try to avoid tourist-packed places such as Charles Bridge, Old City Square, and Wenceslas Square by visiting them at times other than in the middle of the day or weekends. Pickpockets usually work in teams and possess an arsenal of expert techniques to ease tourists of their money and other valuables. They are mostly hunting for cash, credit cards, IDs, passports, cell phones and electronics. Crowded tram and metro cars are among their favorite trap settings. Be very alert when getting on/off a tram and hold any bags/purses/backpacks close to you.

Communication

When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock). To make an international call to the United States, dial the access code for the country from which

you are calling plus the United States country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. To call internationally from the United States, dial “011”, the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number.

Calling to the Czech Republic

International access code: 011

Country code: 420

Prague city code: (0)2

To call the Czech Republic from the United States, your family and friends must dial the international access code, followed by the Czech Republic’s country code and Prague’s city code, and finally your phone number: 011 + 420 + 2 + telephone number

Calling from the Czech Republic

International access code: 00

Country code: 1

To call the United States from the Czech Republic, you will need to dial the international access code, the United States’ country code, the area code and phone number:

00 + 1 + area code + telephone number.

Calling within the Czech Republic

Please note that when you make calls within the Czech Republic you must include a 0 before the city code: 02 + telephone number. However, the 0 is dropped when friends and family make international calls to the Czech Republic, as shown in B above.

Mobile Phones

Having a cell phone while abroad is a very convenient way to coordinate activities with your Czech friends. If you choose to get a mobile phone in the Czech Republic, you do not have to worry about signing a two-year contract like you probably do in the U.S. You can get a pre-paid plan instead, and pay for your mobile minutes as you use them.

There are three major mobile phone providers in the Czech Republic: Vodafone, T-Mobile and EuroTel. If you decide to get a mobile phone during your stay in Prague, be sure to ask your classmates about the advantages and disadvantages of each company so you can choose the provider that best fits your needs.

Post Office

The *Ceska posta*, or Czech Post, can be a challenging experience if you do not speak Czech. Here are some helpful hints if you are trying to buy stamps or send or receive a package:

- A counter with **lištovní služby** displayed above it means you can buy stamps there and send items recorded delivery.
- **Balíkové služby** is where to send individual parcels. This is also where to bring the notification slip you get in your mailbox when you are the receiver of a package. After searching a while, the clerk goes to the back room and (hopefully) returns with your parcel. Be advised, though, that they sometimes ask you to pay a fee to cover customs then and there - especially if the contents of the package are valuable or new. Also, you must have a passport or other ID. The *Ceska posta* offers many other services as well, including paying your bills or making a donation to a charity.

Internet

Internet cafes are abundant in Prague and throughout the Czech Republic. Many internet cafes in Prague are open until midnight or even 24-hours.

Life Abroad

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is located in Central Europe, bordering Germany in the northwest, Poland in the northeast, and Slovakia and Austria in the south. The Czech Republic is divided into two regions: Bohemia in the west and Moravia in the east. Bohemia consists of rolling plains, hills and plateaus surrounded by low mountains and Moravia consists of very hilly country. The Czech Republic has four distinct seasons, with winters that tend to be very cold with snow and summers that are often warm and wet. Continental influences result in wide variations in temperature and precipitation. High temperatures can reach 91 degrees Fahrenheit (33 degrees Celsius) in July and low temperatures can fall to 0s degree Fahrenheit in February. Prague receives on average 18 inches of precipitation annually, with the highest levels of precipitation falling in July. Weather is best May through September when days are warm and nights are cool.

The population in the Czech Republic is roughly 10.2 million. The majority of the population are Czech, with small percentages of Moravian, Slovak and other minority groups. The official language in the Czech Republic is Czech.

The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy, with a president who acts as Chief of State and a prime minister who acts as Head of Government. The parliament elects the president for a five-year term. The president can be reelected for a second term. The president appoints the prime minister. Parliament is elected by popular vote. The country is divided into 13 political regions (*kraje*; singular *-kraj*), with the capital city, Prague, an additional region.

The Czech Republic's economy is one of the most stable and prosperous of the post-Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) increased at an annual rate of 6% in 2005, primarily due to exports to the EU, particularly Germany, and a strong recovery of foreign and domestic investment.

Many people in the Czech Republic (at least 47%) are unaffiliated with a church. Of those who are religious, the majority practice Roman Catholicism (12% of the Czech Republic's total population). Other religions are represented in the country but practiced by a very small group of people.

Czech cuisine is traditionally heavy, consisting primarily of meat (usually pork or beef) and dumplings, potatoes or rice. Sauces and condiments are very popular additions to the meal. A Czech meal is often accompanied by the national beverage, beer (*pivo*).

In less expensive restaurants, the server will leave a little slip on your table to keep a running tab. When you are ready to leave, try to catch the eye of a person carrying a big black wallet. Tipping (around 10% on food) is an appreciated gesture in the Czech Republic like it is here in the US.

Sharing tables with strangers is normal - in less expensive restaurants it's not considered rude for another party to join you at your table if seats are free.

Prague

Prague is the capital and largest city of the Czech Republic. Its official name is *Hlavní město Praha*, meaning *Prague, the Capital City*.

Situated on the River Vltava in central Bohemia, Prague has been the political, cultural, and economic centre of the Czech state for more than 1100 years. The city proper is home to more than 1.2 million people, while its metropolitan area is estimated to have a population of over 1.9 million.

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, Prague has become one of Europe's (and the world's) most popular tourist destinations. It is the sixth most-visited European city after London, Paris, Rome, Madrid and Berlin. Prague suffered considerably less damage during World War II than some other major cities in the region, allowing most of its historic architecture to stay true to form.

There are hundreds of concert halls, galleries, cinemas and music clubs in the city. Prague hosts Music Festivals including the Prague Spring International Music Festival, the Prague Autumn International Music Festival and the Prague International Organ Festival. Film festivals include the Febiofest, the One World and Echoes of the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. Prague also hosts the Prague Writers Festival, the Prague Fringe Festival, the World Roma Festival as well as hundreds of Vernissages and Fashion Shows.

The GDP per capita of Prague is more than double that of the Czech Republic as a whole, with a per-capita GDP (PPP) of 33,784 (purchasing power standard) in 2004, which is 157.1% of the European Union average, ranking Prague among the 12 richest EU regions, in Purchasing Power.

<http://spolubydlo.centrum.cz/hledam/pokoj/praha/>

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT INFORMATION/WEBSITES OF INTEREST

U.S. State Department Students Abroad site:

<https://studyabroad.state.gov/>

UW-Madison International Academic Programs

<http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu>

U.S. State Department:

<http://travel.state.gov>

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Current exchange rates

<http://www.oanda.com>

Lonely Planet – Travel Website

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

Official Czech Republic Tourism Site

<http://www.czechtourism.com/eng/uk/docs/holiday-tips/news/index.html>

Travel guides & other books about the Czech Republic

Learn as much as you can about the Czech Republic before you leave. Travel guides are helpful for providing background information on the Czech Republic's history, geography, politics, and culture as well as for assisting you if you travel to other regions of the country. Novels also provide a glimpse into Czech history, landscape, and way of life.

Recommended Travel Guides:

- *Czech Republic: the Bradt Travel Guide* by Marc di Duca
- *Culture Shock! Czech Republic: A Survival Guide to Customs & Etiquette* by Tim Nollen
- *Frommer's Prague & the best of the Czech Republic* by Hana Mastrini
- *Lonely Planet Czech & Slovak Republics* by Neal Bedford, Jane Rawson, and Matt Warren
- *National Geographic Traveler Prague & the Czech Republic* by Stephen Brooks
- *Rick Steves' Prague & the Czech Republic 2006* by Rick Steves and Honza Vihan

Recommended Books:

- *Traveller's Tales: Prague & the Czech Republic* by Ivan Klima, David Farley, and Jessie Sholl
- *The Coasts of Bohemia: a Czech History* by Derek Sayer
- *Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet* by Rick Fawn

Advice / quotes from past UW participants

On language & culture:

"Learn a little bit of Czech before hand! Common phrases-not duolingo. It might feel colder culturally than the Midwest, consider the political history that has played into that!"

"Czech is an incredibly hard language to learn, but taking the time to learn how to say "hello" "please" "thank you" "sorry" "do you speak English" etc. goes a long way and the locals really appreciate your effort."

"The culture in Europe when it comes to customer service and friends are very different. As long as you respect and communicate your differences it will benefit in the long run."

On the social aspect:

"The strengths [of this program] was it was so international and I was usually the only American and native-English speaker there so it was a wonderful environment to be exposed to and learn in."

“CULS had really nice weekly socializing events. You were able to meet tons of people from across Europe and become really close [friends] with them.”

On campus life/academics:

“CULS had a great campus feel, all of the university buildings were together. Block classes were nice because there was more time to travel to other cities.”

“I wish I learned more in [my classes] and that the university was more academically rigorous.”

On housing:

“The advantage [of living on-campus] was that the dorm was close to my classes and academic buildings. The disadvantage was that the dorm was very old and minimal, and the management could come into your room at any time without warning. There was no safety concerns with the housing, it just wasn't a very nice building.”

“I think that if you are on a budget do the dorms, however I think it would be better to stay in an apartment in the middle because you will have a kitchen and be in the center of everything”

“Start searching early [for off-campus accommodations]. Try to get in touch with people from the Erasmus Student Network for help with finding housing.”

Miscellaneous:

“Print and laminate (or cover with masking tape) any and all health insurance cards you are issued for your time abroad and just keep them in your wallet for easy access”

“Book flights well in advance. Get a student-discounted public transportation multi-month pass. Go to the grocery store for food to save money.”