Howdy, Ags!

Education Abroad at Texas A&M is proud to promote and facilitate safe, transformational, diverse, and inclusive international experiences for over 5,600 Aggies each academic year! We believe that Education Abroad is transformational, and we want ALL students to have access to the benefits of these experiences.

As such, below we’ve compiled information focusing on various identities and Education Abroad. Specifically, we will focus on the following:

- Multicultural Students
- LGBTQIA+
- First-Generation Students
- Students with Disabilities
- Spirituality & Religion
- Gender Considerations
- DACA & Undocumented Students
- General Resources

Why is this important?

If you choose to go abroad, you might find yourself in an unfamiliar and challenging environment where attitudes and perceptions of diversity and identity vary from those in the U.S. It is essential to research the host culture to learn about perceptions, social and historical viewpoints, tolerance, and identify available support systems.

We look forward to connecting with you and welcome you to make a virtual appointment with an advisor to discuss programs or concerns and questions about identity and diversity abroad.

Thanks, and Gig ‘Em!

The Education Abroad Team
Multicultural Students

Racial and ethnic diversity doesn't just impact your education, but your life as a whole, and it can be overwhelming. Your racial/ethnic identity will still be a large part of your Education Abroad experience, but it can look very different from your experience within the US. We have consolidated various resources to help you navigate your identity as you prepare to go abroad, and if you ever have questions, please contact our office!

First Ask Yourself…

- What is the racial/ethnic majority in my host country?
- What have been the main societal issues surrounding locals with similar identities to mine?
- Will I still be part of the minoritized community? If not, what other identities may become more salient?
- What struggles do I face here that I may need to develop a system for while abroad?

Things to consider

- After meeting with your academic advisor to confirm courses to take abroad, reach out to the Department of Multicultural Services (DMS) for identity-based resources and guidance
- Contact Education Abroad and request your host country's Climate Notes
- Reach out to peers who've already studied abroad and learn from their experiences

Check out these links and resources

- Code Switch (podcast)
- Dealing with Stereotypes While Abroad
- Managing Black Hair Abroad
- 10 Reasons For Hispanic-American Students To Study Abroad
- Unpacked (student blog)
- Asian in America, American in Asia
- Race, Culture and Ethnicity in South America
LGBTQIA+

Students who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community should take time to research their host country’s legal and cultural approach to sexual orientation and expression. While within the U.S. there are movements to try to build inclusive equality, other countries could be at a similar point, further ahead, or strictly unaccepting. Please be sure to review the information below and do your research so you may prepare for your program.

First Ask Yourself…

- What are the laws regarding homosexuality and gender identity in my host country?
- Is it safe for me to be out when I’m abroad? Should I come out to my host family?
- What are the cultural norms for dating and friendship?
- What kinds of LGBTQIA+ resources are there in my host country?
- What is the LGBTQIA+ population like in my host country? How visible and large is it? How do they dress, behave, etc.?

Things to consider

You can also start with a list of LGBTQ-friendly locations, such as the one on Lonely Planet or Expatica, and look for programs in these locations. These locations typically have vibrant LGBTQ scenes that you can tap into.

However, you do not need to limit yourself to any specific program or locations! It all depends on your level of comfort and how much local support you want while abroad.

Check out these links and resources

- Breaking the Picture Frame: Studying Abroad While Trans
- Out and About: The Different Experiences of LGBT+ Abroad
- LGBTQIA+ Testimonials from Abroad (CISabroad)
**First-Generation Students**

As a first-generation college student, you may be focusing solely on what it means to be successful in college. Perhaps studying abroad wasn’t a part of your vision for what success looks like. That’s okay! However, there are many benefits to studying abroad that will ultimately make you a stronger candidate for opportunities after graduation. In preparing for study abroad, here are some important considerations.

**First Ask Yourself...**

- What are my professional, academic, and personal goals for my experience abroad?
- What courses align with my degree plan?
- How will I fund my experience?
- Who supports my decision to go abroad?

**Things to consider**

- Work with your academic advisor to find courses that meet requirements.
- Talk to fellow peers and seek advice from study abroad alumni.
- The earlier you start thinking about program cost, the better. Look into multiple sources of funding.
- Identify a support network who will encourage you throughout the education abroad process

**Check out these links and resources**

- TAMU Office for Student Success: [https://studentsuccess.tamu.edu/First-Generation](https://studentsuccess.tamu.edu/First-Generation)
- Diversity Abroad Network: [https://www.diversityabroad.com/articles/first-generation-students-traveling-abroad](https://www.diversityabroad.com/articles/first-generation-students-traveling-abroad)
- GoAbroad: [https://abroad.tamu.edu/StudyAbroad/media/Study-Abroad-Image/meaningful-travel-tips-tales-first-time-study-abroad.pdf](https://abroad.tamu.edu/StudyAbroad/media/Study-Abroad-Image/meaningful-travel-tips-tales-first-time-study-abroad.pdf)
Students with Disabilities

There is a network of individuals committed to guiding you through the planning process and making your desired experience happen. This network of support includes Education Abroad, Disability Resources, the program contact(s), as well as organizations such as Mobility International USA that are dedicated to inclusion.

First Ask Yourself…

• How are people with my disability viewed abroad?
• How should I respond if people give me unsolicited help?
• Am I willing to disclose my disability to others?
• How accessible are places in my host country?
• Will my disability prevent me from participating in certain excursions because of inaccessibility?

Things to consider

• **Traveling with a service or emotional support animal.** Regulations for traveling with an animal will vary so it is recommended to start planning at least a year in advance. Some destinations have extensive, stricter regulations than others. To help get started with verifying the requirements for departing from the U.S. and returning to the U.S. with an animal, check out the below resources:
  - U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - U.S. Department of State Pet and International Travel
  - U.S. Department of Transportation

• **Research the program country.** Ask questions to understand the program, cultural norms, and resources available in your host country (e.g. classroom/housing accessibility, academic services, transportation, required excursions, and health care services).

• **Disclose your disability and medical condition** with the program contacts to initiate the process of securing reasonable accommodations. It may take 4 to 6 months to finalize arrangements.

• **Plan ahead.** Shipment of special supplies, quarantine of service animals, immunizations, travel documents, and other necessary preparations will take time to complete.

• **Be flexible.** Some countries do not have an equivalent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Therefore, the availability of disability accommodations and program adjustments are determined based on the following:
An assessment of the participant’s needs by an Access Coordinator in the Department of Disability Resources,

An examination of the program itinerary with the Education Abroad advisor/trip leader and on-site staff

An exploration of available resources in the participant’s host countries.

You can find more information about requesting accommodations on the Disability Resources website.

Check out these links and resources

- Lonely Planet Accessible Travel Phrasebook
- Lonely Planet Accessible Travel Online Resources (2017 Edition)
- Using Personal Assistance Services Abroad
- Preparations for Travel with a Physical Disability
- Curb Free with Cory Lee
- Preparations for Travel with Mental Health Conditions
- Blog: Why I Chose to Study Abroad Despite my Mental Illness
- 10 Steps to Bring Your Service Animal or Guide Dog to Another Country
- Texas A&M Education Abroad programs types
Spirituality & Religion
Your ability to practice your spiritual & religious beliefs could have a big impact in the program you (and country!) you choose for your Education Abroad experience. Religious freedom does not look the same everywhere, so please make sure to research your country’s history and laws to prepare for what you may encounter.

First Ask Yourself...
- What is the dominant religion in my host country?
- Are there any laws regarding religion?
- How tolerant is the host country of other religions? What about atheists and agnostics?
- Is it safe for me to wear religious symbols or clothing?
- What are ways I can respect the religion in my host country and participate in cultural events, even if I don’t practice that religion?

Programs to consider
1. Imagine studying Jewish philosophy and faith in Israel! How about women in the Arab world?
   a. In fact, you can study these topics and more through Texas A&M Education Abroad! Check out the USAC in Haifa, Israel program for more details.
2. Are you interested in Christian mission work abroad? Would you like to connect with a local church community while studying abroad for course credit?
   a. Our affiliate provider ISA Veritas Christian Study Abroad offers a unique, Christian study abroad and international missions experience in multiple locations including:
      i. Peru
      ii. New Zealand
      iii. France
      iv. Czech Republic
      v. Italy
      vi. Costa Rica
      vii. South Korea
      viii. Italy

Check out these links and resources
- An (Arab-) American in Jordan
- Confessions of a Non-Practicing Catholic in a Super Catholic Country
- Feeding My Faith as a Global Citizen
Gender Considerations

Gender roles will vary country to country, and it is very important to understand your host country’s view on gender norms prior to going abroad. Students who are also part of the LGBTQIA+ community should make sure to clearly research the local cultural norms and laws to ensure a safe and successful experience.

First Ask Yourself...

- What are considered typical gender roles in my host society? What are society’s perceptions and expectations for men and women?
- What are the gender stereotypes of Americans in my host country?
- How do men treat women in my host country?
- Are there differences in political and social power based on gender?
- How do my personal values compare with my host society’s attitudes about socially accepted gender roles? Are there aspects of my personal values that I am willing to compromise on in order to make safe and culturally informed choices?
- How are relationships (both platonic and romantic) between men and women expressed in my host culture?
- How are issues such as gender-based violence, sexual harassment, or sexual assault understood and treated in my host society?

Programs to consider

If you are looking to explore gender, there are programs such as Spain: Alicante - Spanish Language, Linguistics, European, Mediterranean, and Gender Studies (USAC), the Montevideo - Spanish Language, Agribusiness, Viticulture, and Gender Studies program (USAC), or the Short Term International Development Internship in Costa Rica program through GVI that offers you the opportunity to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #5: Gender Equality.

Check out these links and resources

- Diversity Abroad's Women In...
- Traveling While Transgender: A Journey of Self-Love
- 10 Things Not to Do When Dating Locals Abroad
- How to deal with sexual harassment abroad
- Intimacy, gender, and public space
- What to Wear - Journey Women
DACA & Undocumented
DACA students with advanced parole may be eligible to travel internationally for an education abroad program. However, DACA students without advanced parole and other undocumented students still have options to engage globally and participate in culturally immersive experiences! As a result of the COVID-19 travel restrictions, a number of Education Abroad programs are offering virtual study and internship programs. Explore the many options.

First Ask Yourself...
- What do I want to get out an education abroad program? What are my goals?
- What type of experience am I looking for (i.e. study, intern, or research; short vs long-term)?
- Do I have advanced parole? If not, can I get it in time to travel abroad for my program?

Programs to consider
If you want to have an immersive experience outside of Texas, there are programs in Hawaii and Puerto Rico, such as the CIS Abroad Semester in Hawai‘i or the Spanish Studies Abroad Integrated and International Studies programs. Texas A&M University is also expected to join the National Student Exchange (NSE) that will allow Aggies to spend a semester at one of over 100 universities in the US, Puerto Rico, Guam, or the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Check out these links and resources
- How to Gain Global Perspectives During Virtual Study Abroad
- 11 Convincing Reasons to Study Abroad Online

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General Resources
The following websites provide resources for varying identities and are great starting points for your research as you prepare to study abroad.

Education Abroad’s Diversity & Identity Abroad webpage: http://abroad.tamu.edu/Diversity

**Diversity Abroad** - this national organization provides information and resources for diverse students to go abroad.
- **General Guide** - features tips and topics to consider by identity group.
- **Articles Written by Diverse Students About Their Experience Abroad**
- **Destination Guide** - provides information for various identities by country.

**API** - provides diversity, inclusion, and access resources for students of diverse identities participating in education abroad.

**CEA** - features a student blog highlighting diverse student experiences abroad.

**The Education Abroad Network** - includes resources and questions to consider for diverse students planning to go abroad.

**USAC** - features a student blog highlighting stories from students with diverse identities.

**U.S. Department of State** - provides general information for:
- **travelers with special considerations** (religion, ability, LGBTQ+, and women)
- **Country-specific travel and safety guidelines**.

**GoAbroad** - provides free downloadable eBooks tailored to specific identity groups and interests.

**Annual Report on Hate Crimes** - OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) publishes hate crime reports about participating states and countries.