

# A GUIDE FOR LGBTQ+ STUDENTS ABROAD

Studying abroad can open up your world in ways you may never have thought possible. For students who identify with the LGBTQ+ community, studying abroad may simply require a bit of planning and a few questions as you choose a program, but the BW Study Abroad Center is here to help. While researching study abroad opportunities and preparing for departure, it is important to reflect on the cultural standards and definitions of gender and sexual identity. You will find that the social climate, laws, and personal interactions of other cultures will often differ from the U.S. Some countries are open to LGBTQ+ individuals, while others are less accepting. If you go to a country that is more accepting than the U.S., you may feel comfortable being more free and open. On the other end of the spectrum, you could be in a host country where the religious beliefs and customs make you feel that you have to be more 'closeted' in your identity than you are in the U.S. Consider these possibilities and ask yourself, *How open do I want to be?*

## RESEARCH OUR PROGRAM OPTIONS

### INDEPENDENT OR FACULTY-LED PROGRAMS

If you choose an Independent program, you would live for a semester or year abroad in another country and take classes at the host university. If you choose a Faculty Led program, you would take a class at BW and travel as a cohort with two faculty leaders to a country for 2-3 weeks at the end of the semester.

### VISIT OUR OFFICE

When you're ready and prepared to discuss the topic of studying abroad, come and talk to the Study Abroad office. Our team will be able to give you information on the basics of studying abroad, the breadth of programs available to you, transferability of academic credits, location-specific information and travel advice. Take in all of the information, review the opportunities that fit your academic goals, and discuss possibilities with family, friends and maybe even some other LGBT students you know who have studied abroad, too.

## SELECT A PROGRAM

### LAWS OF STUDY ABROAD DESTINATION

Put your safety first. Be sure to know the laws of the country you are traveling to. Before you leave, familiarize yourself with the customs and laws of your host country. In many countries, consensual same-sex sexual activity, public gathering, or distribution of pro-LGBT material may be illegal. While every destination is an option for our LGBTQ+ students, it may be a personal decision whether or not to be out in your destination.

### HOUSING

For our study abroad programs, there are three different varieties of housing depending on the program—apartments, on-campus housing, or with a host family. If you choose to live with a host family, be aware of the culture within the country to gauge the views your host family may or may not have, and make a personal decision to come out or not to your host family.

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Research what kind of rights LGBTQ+ individuals have in the host country. Are there any specific laws regarding same-sex relationships or associations with LGBTQ+ individuals?
- What role do trans\* and non-binary individuals play in the host culture?
- Connect with previous LGBTQ+ students who have studied abroad to talk about how they navigated and experienced sexual and gender identity in their host country.
- Will local cultural values and host country laws affect my decision in where to study abroad?
- Does my LGBTQ+ identity conflict with the host country's cultural or religious values and traditions?
- Do you want or need to be part of a supportive LGBTQ+ community?
- Are there LGBTQ+ organizations on the host campus or in the community?
- What, if any, safety considerations should I be aware of? Is it safe for me to be out about my sexual and/or gender identity in the host country?
- What is the social perception of members of the LGBTQ+ community in the host culture?
- Does the study abroad program offer LGBTQ+ friendly housing?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### U.S. EMBASSY & CONSULATE INFORMATION

If you need help, contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. The nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate may be able to help if you run into problems overseas, especially if you feel you cannot approach local police or have had difficulties already. Consular officers will protect your privacy and will not make generalizations, assumptions, or pass judgement. Let them know about any inappropriate treatment or harassment you experience. If you are arrested, immediately ask the police to notify the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

### EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- NAFA's Rainbow Special Interest Group counsels study abroad students who identify as LGBTQ+ ([rainbowsig.org](http://rainbowsig.org))
- Study Abroad Tips for LGBTQ+ Students (<https://isatoday.wordpress.com/2015/12/18/diversity-abroad-tips-for-lgbt-students-abroad-insights-from-my-studies-in-paris/>)
- IES Abroad LGBTQ+ and Ally resources ([iesabroad.org/student-diversity-access/resources/lgbtq](http://iesabroad.org/student-diversity-access/resources/lgbtq))
- Global Gayz is a travel blog dedicated to telling the LGBTQ+ global experience ([globalgayz.com](http://globalgayz.com))
- LGBTQ+ Study Abroad Information "Know an LGBTQ Student Itching to Study Abroad? Here Are Some Things to Think About" (<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2018/08/22/606018920/know-an-lgbtq-student-itching-to-study-abroad-here-are-some-things-to-think-about>)
- US State Department Country Human Rights Reports (<https://www.state.gov/reports-bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/>)
- US State Department Travel Information (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/lgbti.html>)
- Transportation Security Administration's (TSA's) notes on trans\* passengers traveling through airport security (<https://www.tsa.gov/transgender-passengers>)

Adapted from Case Western Reserve University, Georgetown University, NAFA: Association of International Educators, Princeton University, and Yale University.



**QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!**

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