

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ABROAD

Students with disabilities can succeed in study abroad programs with support from Baldwin Wallace University and its international partners. The key to studying abroad is planning ahead, and understanding that attitudes and accommodations abroad vary by country. Understanding your accommodation needs will help in selecting the best study abroad program for you.

If you are planning to study abroad, you are not required to inform the Study Abroad Center of a disability. However, many accommodations require early planning, and requests for accommodations that are made as early as possible (preferably right after acceptance to a program) will enable us to better assist you. If you are a BW student who is already registered with Disability Services for Students, your accommodation information is not automatically transferred from Disability Services to the Study Abroad Center. Please contact Disability Services for Students, which in turn will coordinate with the Study Abroad Center regarding accommodations. While many study abroad programs can accommodate students, the extent to which accommodations can be provided depends on the nature of the accommodation, the general situation in the particular country regarding accessibility and services, and the creativity and flexibility in planning for the experience abroad.

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 students with disabilities 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. While many countries have laws concerning disability and accessibility, a country should not be characterized as accessible solely based on those laws. The cultural values of a country can strongly impact the experience a student with disabilities may have.

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 choosing to live with a host family, be aware of the disability culture within the country to gauge the views your host family may or may not have.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Talk to a study abroad advisor about your particular needs, study abroad options, and possible site-specific information pertaining to your disability
- Contact Disability Services for Students to request that your Letter of Accommodation (LOA) be shared with your study abroad advisor, who will pass along this information to your study abroad institution.
- Speak with other students with disabilities to learn about their experiences abroad
- How will my disability affect which study abroad program I consider?
- Will I disclose my disability to the Study Abroad Center or the host program?
- How will I plan ahead to manage my disability before going abroad?
- What barriers might I encounter (both in planning to go abroad, and while abroad), and how will I overcome them?
- How will the resources I have abroad differ from what I am accustomed to at BW?
- How may my disability be perceived in my host country?
- What activities or excursions abroad (if any) will I not be able to participate in due to my disability?

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

- Mobility International USA (miusa.org)
- Diversity Abroad (diversityabroad.com/article/students-disabilities-abroad)
- Transitions Abroad (transitionsabroad.com/listings/travel/disability)
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators Information for Students with Disabilities (<http://homepages.bw.edu/~kcatrina/NAFSAstudentswithdisabilities.pdf>)
- US State Department resources for Americans traveling abroad with disabilities (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/traveling-with-disabilities.html>)
- Read personal stories from students with accommodations abroad (<https://www.ifsa-butler.org/see-yourself-abroad/#section-7>)

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



QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

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