



Disabilities Abroad

**GLOBAL
ENGAGEMENT**

The University of Michigan is committed to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and encourages all Wolverines to go abroad. This resource is provided to help you think critically about cultural attitudes and perceptions surrounding your social identity in a global context. U-M acknowledges that many students relate to multiple identities and welcomes you to use this resource as a tool to explore opportunities abroad.



Education abroad is possible

Participating in an international experience at U-M is a chance to seek new opportunities, broaden your perspective, and build global competence. Managing your disability abroad can be a significant source of growth, challenge, and reflection in a new and unfamiliar environment. You may already be familiar with navigating challenges associated with your disability on campus, but there will likely be a different context to negotiate in your host culture. When preparing for an education abroad experience, it is important to ensure the country you are traveling to will be a good fit for your disability and accommodation needs.

Prior to departure, research your host country, request appropriate accommodations, ensure any medications you take are legal in your destination, and arrange for the support required to manage your disability.

Consider accommodations overseas

It is important to keep in mind that other parts of the world have different standards of accessibility and perceptions of persons with disabilities. Many countries may offer increased disability

accommodations, while others may have more limited options. The U.S. has laws in place, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to ensure accessible accommodations, but your travel destination likely has different laws or cultural perceptions of those with disabilities. Be sure to ask for accommodations in advance as it may take additional time to arrange in your host country.

Remember that it is vital to be flexible and adaptable when traveling. You are encouraged to stretch your comfort zone while still maintaining your safety.

Reflecting on your identities

Talking to other students with disabilities who have traveled overseas can be a great resource to help you become more aware of how your accessibility needs fit into an unfamiliar environment. It is essential to plan ahead to negotiate any potential challenges you may face in relation to your disability so your experience abroad will be as smooth as possible. Opportunities to go abroad are available to students of all identities and you are encouraged to engage in an enriching international experience.

Explore Education Abroad Opportunities at global.umich.edu

Disabilities Abroad

As you consider and prepare for an international experience, use the following questions to guide you. Keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive list and you may relate to multiple identities. You are encouraged to discuss these topics in-person with an education abroad advisor in your school or college. The **Services for Students with Disabilities office (SSD)** and the **Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS)** can also provide guidance and resources as you prepare for your experience.

Considering disability accommodations abroad

- What accommodations do I require to manage my disability?
- How can I access these accommodations (such as a wheelchair, additional time to take tests, or counseling appointments) while overseas?
- What coping strategies do I use in the U.S. to manage my disability? How will I apply or modify these while I'm abroad?
- If I am unable to get the accommodations I need, how can I adapt or create alternative strategies to address them?
- How does my preferred host country address and perceive physical mobility (ramps, elevators, Personal Care Assistants, etc.) and/or invisible or non-apparent disabilities (learning disabilities, ADHD, anxiety, asthma, etc.)?
- What laws and infrastructure are in place in my preferred host country to help support persons with disabilities?
- Is there a local community of people with similar disabilities that I could connect with?

Meet with an on-campus advisor

- How will in-country infrastructure, such as unpaved roads, availability of ramps or elevators, and access to medications potentially impact my experience?
- Once I have chosen a program, how will I negotiate international and in-country transportation as it relates to my disability? Will I need to prearrange accessible airport transportation upon departure and arrival to my host country? How will I manage my transportation needs once I am in-country?
- What type of housing is available in my destination country? Will this adequately address my accommodation needs?
- Will my FAFSA or other U-M funding sources transfer over to my education abroad experience? What sources of funding are available for education abroad opportunities?
- What on-campus support and resources can I access overseas?

Additional resources, including funding, on-and off-campus support, and pre-departure materials can be found on Global Michigan at www.global.umich.edu.

Go BLUE. Go ABROAD.
global.umich.edu