

M LGBTQ+ 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.



Reflecting on your identities

Expressing your LGBTQ+ identity 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 being LGBTQ+ 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 consider how your LGBTQ+ identity will be perceived within the context of your host country.

Talking with other LGBTQ+ students who have traveled overseas can be a great resource to help you become more aware of these new dynamics, and give you some ideas about how to navigate your specific identities in a new culture. Remember that opportunities to go abroad are available to students of all identities and you are encouraged to engage in an enriching international experience.

Considering cultural context

Every culture has its own set of norms, laws, and attitudes about LGBTQ+ individuals. Many countries are very

accepting of LGBTQ+ persons, while others are less tolerant. These varying attitudes make it essential to consider how identifying as LGBTQ+ can impact your experience abroad, including how it could positively or negatively affect your health, safety, and well-being as you travel. Before choosing an overseas destination, consider the local context and how you will manage your LGBTQ+ identity in that setting.

Owning your identities

Owning and negotiating your identities abroad can be an important aspect of your overseas journey. LGBTQ+ communities exist throughout the world and going abroad, while challenging, may also provide an opportunity for positive connection and growth.

Set yourself up for success overseas by taking ownership of your experience and planning as much as you can before you depart. Research your host country, connect with on-campus resources, ensure any medications you take are legal and accessible in your destination, and plan how you will stay in touch with your support system while away from home.

Explore Education Abroad Opportunities at global.umich.edu

LGBTQ+ 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 Spectrum Center can also provide guidance and resources as you prepare for your experience.

Research and reflect

- How might my identity influence where I choose to travel?
- How does my preferred host country view LGBTQ+ individuals?
- Is it safe for me to be openly “out” or expressive of my identity in my preferred host country?
- How will being “out” affect my health and safety? How might it also affect the relationships I form in my host country?
- If English is not the first language in my host country, how will I communicate information about my LGBTQ+ identity?
- In addition to being LGBTQ+, what other social identities do I hold? How will these identities affect my experience abroad?

Meet with an on-campus advisor

- What on-campus support and resources will I continue to have access to overseas?
- How might laws and cultural norms in my host country affect my ability to express my identity?
- Will I have the same access to medications as I do in the United States?
- Is there a local LGBTQ+ community I can connect with abroad?
- What is my host culture’s perspective on gender identity (binary, non-binary, etc.) and gender roles?
- 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?

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

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