

Questions for LGBTQ+ Students to Consider

This guide is meant to help you consider questions that may assist you in choosing a study abroad program and preparing for your departure. Some of these questions may be challenging to answer on your own, or may bring up various feelings, concerns, or additional questions. Resources on your campus are available to process these questions with you if you would like, including your study abroad advisor, DEI office, LGBTQ+ resource center, Counseling Services, and more. Please consider your comfort level in revealing aspects of your identity before choosing to discuss them openly.

A note from the authors: Our intention is to talk about safety in new contexts openly and without preconceptions on students' identities, actions, or choices. Our focus, instead, is on how students can make their own informed choices by developing both an understanding of factors such as the cultural practices, beliefs, norms, and laws, along with an awareness of their own goals, comfort levels, and expectations. We all hold multiple identities--keep in mind when reflecting on the questions below how your intersecting identities, such as race, nationality, disability, socioeconomic status, and others may also play a role in how you experience your time abroad. The resources in this guide are not exhaustive but may be a helpful starting point in your research as you consider how you might answer some of the questions below.

Do you know of a resource that you think should be shared on this page? Do you have other ideas for this page? Please contact **[the International Programs Office]** to let us know.

About You:

My identity

- How open will I be about my sexual orientation and/or gender identity with my study abroad coordinator, teachers, peers, friends, host family, and others?
- How prepared do I feel to educate others or answer questions that people may have about my identity?
- How might my experience abroad impact my understanding of my identity? How might I want to explore or reflect upon my identity in this new context?
- How might my intersecting identities impact my answers to any of these questions?

Identity-based resources

- [9 Major Life Lessons I Learned Studying Abroad as an LGBT \[student\]](#)
- [IES Abroad LGBTQ+ Resources](#)
- [Diversity Abroad: LGBTQIA+ Students](#)

Health & Safety

- What are my safety needs and perceptions, and how can they best be met?
- Is the program able to make accommodations for students who request single rooms, private baths, or specific roommates?
- Do I plan to pursue romantic and/or sexual relationships while abroad? If sexual, will I have access to appropriate safer sex supplies?
- Will I need access to any medications, e.g. hormone replacement therapy, PrEP, PEP, supplies, or services? Are they available in my host country? If not, will I need any additional documentation to travel with my medication or supplies? If yes, will my study abroad health insurance cover the costs?

Health & Safety resources

- [Online Dating and Dating App Safety](#)
- [Diversity Abroad: LGBTQIA+ Students](#)
- [Prepmap.org](#) (Asia/Pacific Only)
- [Man About World: LGBTQ Travel Safety Guide](#)

Community and Support

- How important is it to me to find other LGBTQ+ students and friends while abroad? How will I make connections with other LGBTQ+ students, local residents, or community organizations?
- What are my expectations about seeking and finding community?
- Can my study abroad office or program connect me with other LGBTQ+ students who have studied abroad and are willing to share their experiences?
- What are my support systems and how can I connect with them before, during, and after my study abroad experience?

Community & Support resources

- [It Gets Better \(Global\)](#)
- [Queer in the World](#)

About Your Host Country:

Cultural Norms & Beliefs

- What are the cultural attitudes toward sexual orientation and gender identity in my host country?

Cultural Resources

- [Diversity Abroad Destination Guides](#)
- [IES Abroad Country Specific Resources](#)
- [GoAbroad LGBTQ Guide](#)

Applicable Laws and LGBTQ+ Rights

- Are there “public indecency/decency” laws? Or any laws that criminalize same-sex sexual relationships, or ways people of the same or different genders socially interact?
- What is the age of consent? Does it differ depending on the gender(s) of the individuals involved?
- What is the general police attitude toward the local LGBTQ+ community? Toward LGBTQ+ visitors or tourists?
- Is the law applied the same in rural areas as in urban areas?

Laws & Rights Resources

- [LGBT Rights from Queer in the World](#)
- [ILGA Map](#)
- [Amnesty International USA LGBT Rights](#)
- [LGBTQIA+ Laws and Resources Interactive Map \(UC Davis\)](#)
- [International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission \(OutRight International\)](#)
- [Erasing 76 Crimes](#)
- [US Department of State Resources for LGBTI Travelers](#)

Connecting with Community

- What is the history of LGBTQ+ people within my host country?
- What resources or organizations are available in my host country for LGBTQ+ people? Are there any LGBTQ+-friendly establishments nearby? How can I find them?
- What apps or social media platforms are available or popular in my host country? Could my use of these apps or platforms leave me vulnerable/exposed to discrimination, judgement, or safety concerns?
- What resources or organizations are available in my host country for LGBTQ+ people who may need legal resources or support?

Community Resources

- [Online Dating and Dating App Safety](#)
- [GlobalGayz](#)

Questions trans, nonbinary, and/or gender expansive students may want to ask themselves:

- Transgender and/or nonbinary students might face challenges if officials perceive differences between your gender presentation and how your name or gender is recorded on your legal documents or plane ticket. Have you considered how you might navigate such challenges if they arise? Do you need to obtain a new passport with your correct name and gender? Individuals with US passports are now able to self-select the gender marker on their passport without additional documentation. The gender markers available include female (F), male (M), or unspecified or another gender identity (X).
- If you take hormones, will you have access to them in your host country? If yes, will you be able to take them in the way you are accustomed to (e.g., gel, injection, pill, etc.)?
- If you use pronouns such as they/them, xe/xem, or other neutral or neopronouns, how might you navigate sharing those with others in your host country? Are there gender neutral or neopronouns in the language of your host community that you would like to use? If yes, how might you approach that topic with native speakers who may not be aware of these pronouns or language use within their own language?
- If you go by a name that is different from your legal/passport name, have you considered how you might go about sharing that with your program/faculty? Who might be able to assist you with these communications?
- What are the gendered expectations for dress and/or behavior in your host community? How might you navigate those expectations in a way that promotes your safety and respect for your host culture and also allows you to express yourself in a way that feels authentic and affirming?
- How are trans and/or nonbinary people perceived in the host culture? Are there differences in traditional/modern or rural/urban settings? Is socio-economic status a factor?
- Is there a documented pattern of violence against trans and/or nonbinary people?

Gender Identity Related Resources to Consider:

[Selecting your US Passport Gender Marker](#)

[Changing the Name on your US Passport](#)

[National Center for Transgender Equality](#)

[Know Your Rights \(Airport Security\)](#)

[Issues | International](#)

[Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide Legal and Social Mapping Project](#)

Some Further Resources to Consider:

[GoAbroad LGBTQ Guide](#)

[NAFSA Rainbow SIG Newsletter](#)