

International Experiences Considerations Checklist

Overall Physical, Attitudinal and Cultural Access in Your Chosen Country

- Research as much as possible about the country(ies), city(ies), and host university(ies) of interest. Cultural interpretation of disability may be different in other regions.
- How does the chosen host culture(s) define disability? How will questions about disability be answered? This information may provide an idea of how receptive a particular host institution/organization may be with providing accommodations or accessibility services and how levels of independence might change.

Financial Considerations

- Are there extensive financial costs involved with accommodations or accessibility needs, and if so, how will these costs be supported?

Transportation Needs

- Consider what kinds of travel accommodations will be required during travel to and within the host city and between destinations. It is imperative to find out if there are any accessible transportation resources or community support within a host country.
- Will covering costs of private transportation be feasible, when necessary, due to inaccessible public transportation?

Housing and Living Situations

- Research what housing and living options are available through the program(s). Are the room dimensions physically accessible to individual needs?
- Are there accessible bathroom and shower facilities within any of the housing options? If not, what can be done to address these accessibility issues?

Activities of Daily Living

- How are needs going to be met if personal care assistance is required for activities of daily living such as meal preparation, grooming, dressing, restroom assistance, or laundry assistance? Are there agencies available to assist in the hiring process for personal care assistance in the host country?
- How will costs with personal care assistance be covered?

Auxiliary Aids or Assistive Devices

- Are replacement parts for auxiliary aids going to be readily available in the event damage occurs?
- Is there access to agencies or professionals who can repair auxiliary aids, if necessary?

Service Animals

- Are there any laws in the host country which support service animals? If not, how will this impact access?
- Are there veterinary services available in the host city? If so, where are they located? Is it conveniently accessible?
- What are the airline regulations for service animals traveling abroad?
- Is there a quarantine period for service animals to or from your host country?

Curriculum

- Be aware of the nature of required coursework and evaluation. Consider how classwork will be evaluated and what the usual methods of instruction are at the host institution. Will there be multiple choice or essay exams? Are classes project-driven or exam-driven? How much reading is involved?
- Will document conversion be required and available?
- Are the course materials that are audio or visual in format, such as videos or films, accessible to you (e.g. captioned videos)?
- Are library resources accessible? If not, what can be done to provide access?

Activities Outside of the Classroom

- While studying abroad, there will likely be times when students have to complete curriculum activities or assignments outside the classroom for graded credit, or there might be free time on weekends when students can travel..
- Will mobility assistance for these activities be required? If so, who will be available to assist?
- Will students be required to stay in different housing arrangements for any outside activities (e.g. field trips, excursions, etc.)? If so, is the alternative housing accessible?
- What are the overall conditions of public sidewalks, pavement of streets, and overall landscape?

On-Campus Support Services at the Host Institution/Organization and Access to Additional Support Services

- Does the host institution/organization have a disability services office, or a point of contact designated to address accommodations and/or accessibility needs?
- Investigate what resources are available through the host institution/organization as well as any community resources to address medical, psychological, and/or informational support.

Healthcare Coverage

- All Western student travelers are required to possess out-of-country travel insurance. Verify the details of your coverage abroad and discuss any needs for accommodations and for covering pre-existing medical conditions. Refer to [Western's Safety Abroad Steps for Students](#) for more information on out-of-country travel insurance requirements.

Prescription Medications

- Consider how refills of prescription medications will be handled, especially if they are stimulant medication. Be sure to check whether the prescribed medication is legal and available within a chosen host country. Contact the nearest consulate or embassy for the host country to inquire whether your medication is considered a controlled substance and to seek guidance on the best way to proceed.
- Verify in advance if it is possible to take enough medication to last your entire stay abroad.
- Research if it is possible to take the Canadian prescription and letter from your physician to an English-speaking physician in your host country to get a local prescription and/or whether prescriptions may need to be translated. If this is a possibility, it is imperative that the prescriptions and translations are accurately completed and to ensure the proper dosage you need exists in the host country.
- Disposable Syringes - research whether or not disposable syringes will pass the security check at all transit airports. Some countries may restrict the import of syringes.

Resources to assist with your research:

- [International SOS \(ISOS\)](#) – Use Western's [membership number](#) (Western login credentials required) to access the ISOS country guides
- [Government of Canada](#) destination specific travel information
- [Atlas](#) program specific information
- Host institution/organization – the [International Learning](#) team can put you in contact with the appropriate staff at the host institution/organization to assist with any questions related to available services
- [Medications When Traveling Internationally](#): issues related to availability, legality, coverage of costs, back-up supply, time zone changes, interaction with other medications.