

OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

*identity matters*



**Hope** COLLEGE

CENTER FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

BE YOURSELF

# OFF-CAMPUS

Identity matters! At the Center for Global Engagement, we are committed to helping every student succeed while studying off-campus. We recognize that our identities impact our experiences, so we encourage students to make informed decisions about their study locations. This resource is designed to guide you as you explore and research off-campus opportunities.

## WHAT IS IDENTITY?

Identity is part of your persona. Research countries on [Diversity Abroad's Destination Guides](#) or the [U.S. State Department's Country Information](#) pages where there are specific sections that talk about the diversity and the inclusiveness of each country.

## INTERSECTIONALITY

As you plan to study off campus, it can be helpful to reflect on how your identities intersect and influence how you are perceived by others. Considering this aspect of your identity is important, as you'll be bringing your whole self - along with all your experiences and identities - with you on this journey.

- [The Urgency of Intersectionality](#) TED talk by Kimberlé Crenshaw
- [Beyond Guilt Trips](#) by Anu Taranath
- [Navigating Identity & Diversity Abroad](#) from IES Abroad



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PLAN AHEAD

# RESOURCES



[Country](#)



[City](#)



[Family](#)



[Parents](#)

## LEARN MORE!

- > [First Generation](#)
- > [Gender](#)
- > [LGBTQIA+](#)
- > [Health & Disabilities](#)
- > [Race & Ethnicity](#)
- > [Religion & Faith](#)



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## OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

# FIRST GEN

As a first-generation student, exploring off-campus study is an exciting opportunity to enhance your college experience! It offers a chance to immerse yourself in new cultures, gain unique perspectives, and develop essential skills.

**I'M  
FIRST.**

As the first in your family to attend college, you have experience navigating new systems and advocating for yourself. You've already gained important skills that will equip you for this experience. Studying off-campus can feel much like a college search, and it's normal to have questions about funding, the application process, or what it's like to travel alone. You might worry about how to talk to your parents or feel uncertain about whether off-campus study is a realistic option for you.

While the process may feel overwhelming at times, remember you're not alone in this journey. We're here to support and guide you every step of the way. Your adventure is just beginning!



[First-Gen Resources IES Abroad](#)



[First-Gen Resources TEAN](#)



[First-Gen Study Abroad Guide](#)



[Travel Tips for First Time Travelers](#)



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## > FINANCES

Many people assume that it is expensive to study off-campus, but there are so many resources available to make it possible! Hope College allows students to take up their financial aid package with them for up to 2 semesters\*. Scholarships are available through Hope and our off-campus study providers. Additionally, many first-gen students qualify for [Gilman Scholarship](#) or the [Fund for Education Abroad's](#) scholarships.

*\*Check with the Financial Aid Office to see how your specific aid packages applies to off-campus study.*

## > FAMILY

We recommend including your family in the planning process, as they might have questions about things like safety and finances. Some parents might feel resistant to the idea of studying off-campus, but involving them in the planning process can help them understand how this is part of improving your future through your education.

## > TRAVEL

Do you have a passport? Have you traveled internationally before? If you are new to navigating travel, Hope's Off-Campus Study team is here to walk with you through the process. Set up a meeting with one of our advisors!



[Holland City  
Clerk's Office](#)  
[Passport  
Service](#)

### CAMPUS RESOURCES

#### [First-Gen Student Union](#)

[1genhope@hope.edu](mailto:1genhope@hope.edu)

#### [Center for Global Engagement](#)

[offcampusstudy@hope.edu](mailto:offcampusstudy@hope.edu) | P. 616.395.7605



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## OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

# GENDER

No matter where you decide to study off-campus, you'll likely experience a new dynamic when it comes to gender norms. What is normal to you might seem strange in a new country and vice versa. For example, the culture might uphold traditional gender roles; gender expression might be more fluid; or male-female friendships might be less common.

In preparing to go off-campus, we encourage you to research gender norms in your host country. Some questions to consider:

- What are the cultural attitudes toward women/men?
- Do people have stereotypes of women/men in general and American women/men in particular?
- Are there safety considerations while traveling?
- Are there attire-related norms I need to be aware of? How does religion play a role in how women are expected to dress?
- What are the cultural norms regarding dating and friendships between genders? How are personal boundaries expressed in my host culture?

*Adapted from "Gender Roles Abroad," University of Notre Dame*



[State Dept.  
Resources](#)



[Women  
Going Abroad](#)



[Tips on Street  
Harassment](#)



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## **INTERSECTIONALITY**

Your experience of gender abroad will be impacted by other parts of your identity, including your race/ethnicity, your sexuality, and your gender expression. Check out other pages in this booklet for resources.

### **> DATING AND FRIENDSHIPS**

Relationships between men and women can look different depending on the culture. Behaviors that you consider friendly might come across as flirty. Some cultures show affection openly, while others have strict personal boundaries. Additionally, some countries perceive Americans as “easy” or “promiscuous” because of American media. If you choose to date while studying abroad, be aware of the stereotypes and cultural norms affecting your interactions.

### **> UNWANTED ATTENTION**

As a foreigner, you might stand out and receive unwanted attention. This unwanted attention might just be an annoyance, or it could turn into a situation that makes you feel unsafe. You should never accept behaviors that make you feel uncomfortable or make you question your security. To minimize unwanted attention, observe how locals dress and act in public, and ask your program provider for tips on cultural norms. Research safety tips for your host country, and avoid situations where your safety might be at jeopardy.

### **> SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Unfortunately, sexual harassment and assault can happen while studying off-campus, just like it can happen in the U.S. Learning about gender dynamics can help empower you against harassment. Be sure to report any cases of harassment to your program provider.



## OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

# LGBTQIA+

Studying off-campus as an LGBTQIA+ student can offer a unique opportunity to explore diverse cultures and perspectives while affirming your identity. It's important to research the inclusivity of your host location, as experiences can vary widely across different communities. Connecting with local LGBTQIA+ groups and resources can enhance your experience and provide a supportive network during your time away.

### KNOW YOURSELF

Before choosing where to study off-campus, take some time to reflect on what you want to gain from the experience and how your sexuality might influence it. Is the location welcoming to diverse sexual orientations, or does it have a more restrictive attitude toward sexuality? Consider whether you plan to be open about your sexual orientation with new people or if you'd rather keep it private.



[Free Ebook  
LGBTQI Student  
Guide to Study  
Abroad](#)



[U.S.  
Department of  
State - LGBTQI+  
Travelers](#)



[ILGA World  
Maps](#)



[Equaldex Index  
LGBTQ+ Rights  
Across the  
World](#)

### CAMPUS RESOURCES

[Center for Diversity and Inclusion](#)  
diversity@hope.edu | P. 616.395.70

[Center for Global Engagement](#)  
offcampusstudy@hope.edu | P. 616.395.7605



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## > CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

It's important to know that acceptance of LGBTQIA+ individuals varies globally. As a guest, it is your responsibility to be culturally sensitive, and attempting to change local attitudes can lead to challenges. Prepare yourself by researching local laws, societal norms, and support systems. By doing so, you can navigate more confidently and ensure a positive off-campus study experience.

## > NEWS & SAFETY

Stay informed about LGBTQIA+ news domestically and abroad. Keeping up with local developments will help you understand the current climate and how you may be impacted.

- [Human Rights Watch](#)
- [LGBTQ Nation](#)
- [Washington Blade](#)

## > TRANS & NON-BINARY TRAVEL

Be prepared for travel by researching your rights and identifying resources.

- [Passport Gender Marker - U.S. Government](#)
  - U.S. passports with an X gender marker may not be recognized by all countries, possibly affecting your entry. Verify with the foreign embassy or consulate in the United States before traveling.
- [Travel & Airport Security - Advocates for Trans Equality](#)
- [TSA Transgender Passenger - U.S. Government](#)
- [Transgender Resources - GLAAD](#)



## OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

# HEALTH & DISABILITIES

Studying off-campus can be an incredible opportunity for personal growth and exploration, and for students with health concerns or disabilities, it can also present unique challenges. It's important to know that you are not alone in this journey, and there are resources and strategies available to help you succeed.

When studying off-campus, it's important to prepare for a variety of experiences. Expect to do a lot of walking, so comfortable shoes and planning your routes can make a big difference. Research the accessibility of your host city and country, including public transportation and local facilities, to ensure you can navigate your new environment with ease.

Don't hesitate to reach out to your program coordinators about academic accommodations you may need. They can help you access the resources necessary to support your learning. Being proactive in these areas will help you have a more enjoyable and successful off-campus experience!

We've asked you to prepare for studying off-campus, and we want you to know that we're ready to support you too! If an emergency arises while you're away, you'll be assisted by trained staff on-site who are there to help you and ensure you receive the care you need.

### CAMPUS RESOURCES

[Disability and Accessibility Resources](#)  
[dar@hope.edu](mailto:dar@hope.edu) | P. 616.395.7925

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)  
P. 616.395.7945

[Center for Global Engagement](#)  
[offcampusstudy@hope.edu](mailto:offcampusstudy@hope.edu) | P. 616.395.7605



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## › **DISABILITIES & CHRONIC CONDITIONS**

While off-campus, establish a daily routine that includes time for self-care, medication management, and adequate rest. Stay connected with your support network and local resources to ensure you have access needed care.

## › **MENTAL HEALTH**

It's essential to prioritize your mental health throughout your off-campus study experience. Before departing, share your mental health history on your application and with Program Directors. Reflect on what your care needs are and confirm with diagnose(s) and treatment with your therapist.

## › **MEDICATIONS**

Continuing your medications while studying off-campus is important to maintain your mental health and well-being. Before you go, research how your medication is classified abroad and whether you can obtain refills there, as some medications may be banned or illegal. Consult your healthcare provider about bringing a supply of your medications, and request a letter on their letterhead that includes both the brand and generic names, as well as an explanation for the quantity. When traveling, be sure to keep your prescription medications in their labeled bottles.



**The ultimate guide to studying abroad with a disability.**



**Tips for Studying Abroad with Disabilities and Chronic Conditions**



**Studying Abroad with Anxiety.**



**How to Manage Depression While Abroad**



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## OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

# RACE & ETHNICITY

Diversity is at the core of off-campus study, allowing you to engage with people from various backgrounds. Your experiences related to race and ethnicity can vary significantly based on your location. Depending on the predominant culture of your host city, you may find that you either blend in or stand out more than you do at home.

### Experiencing Race Abroad



[Navigating Identity  
in a Foreign Country](#)



[Casual Racism  
in Travel](#)



[Realizing My Skin  
Color Abroad](#)

In some parts of the world, discussions about race can be more candid than in the U.S., and you might encounter questions that feel intrusive. You may face stereotypes, unfair assumptions, or simply curiosity. These experiences can evoke a range of emotions, so it's important to connect with a trusted person in your program or back home to talk it through. If you experience discrimination, please report it to your program leaders.

#### CAMPUS RESOURCES

[Center for Diversity and Inclusion](#)  
[diversity@hope.edu](mailto:diversity@hope.edu) | P. 616.395.70

[Center for Global Engagement](#)  
[offcampusstudy@hope.edu](mailto:offcampusstudy@hope.edu) | P. 616.395.7605



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[7 Things Only Latino Travelers Understand](#)



[Traveling Abroad as an Asian American Woman](#)



[Traveling While Black: 9 Truths](#)



[10 Tips for Being BIPOC Abroad](#)

### > HERITAGE SEEKERS

Going abroad is a chance to connect with your heritage and explore part of your identity. You might walk the line between being part of the culture and feeling like an outsider.

### > NATURAL HAIR CARE

Depending on where you study abroad, natural hair care products might not be available. Bring your favorite products with you, and find a local salon abroad with experience working with natural hair.

### > INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Can you study off-campus as an international student? Yes! Be sure to look into visa regulations if you pick a destination abroad, or consider one of our domestic programs.



[Tips for Heritage Seekers](#)



[Tips for Natural Hair](#)



[Tips for International Students](#)



[Hope Student Being an International Student in London](#)



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# RELIGION & FAITH

Studying off-campus can be a transformative experience that not only sustains your beliefs but also allows you to explore and grow in them. While you are away, we encourage you to dive deeper into your faith! Below are five tips to help you stay engaged.

### 1

#### **Attend Local Services**

Discover places of worship in your local community. Participating in services can give you a deeper understanding of local beliefs and practices.

### 2

#### **Join Religious or Spiritual Groups**

Look for student organizations related to various faiths. These groups often organize events and activities, providing a great way to connect with others who share your interests.

### 3

#### **Participate in Cultural Events**

Check out religious festivals and cultural events in your area. These gatherings often showcase unique traditions, food, and music that can enhance your understanding of local spiritual practices.

### 4

#### **Take Relevant Courses**

Consider enrolling in classes that explore religion, theology, or ethics. These courses can offer valuable insights into how faith shapes different cultures.

### 5

#### **Volunteer with Faith-Based Organizations**

Get involved with local faith-based charities or community service projects. This hands-on experience allows you to explore the role of faith in addressing social issues while making a positive impact.



In preparing to go off-campus, we encourage you to research religions in your host country. Some questions to consider:

- Will you be part of a religious majority or a religious minority?
- If you are planning to practice your religion, are there any places of worship available to you? If not, what alternative plans will you make?
- How accepting is your host country of various religions and spiritual beliefs? Will it be safe for you to wear religious symbols and/or clothing?
- Is there separation of church and state in your host country? Are there specific laws regarding religion that you should be aware of?
- If you dietary restrictions based on your religion, will they be accommodated in your host country? If you're staying in a homestay, are you open to living with a family of a different religious background?
- Are there public celebrations of religious holidays in your host country?
- Are there any places of worship you can visit as part of your program or independently? What should you know before visiting, such as dress code or customs?

*Adapted from "Religion & Spirituality Abroad", Brown University.*



**Faith-Based  
Travelers U.S.  
Department  
of State**



**IES Abroad  
Religion &  
Spirituality  
Resources**

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

### Campus Ministries

[chaplain@hope.edu](mailto:chaplain@hope.edu) | P. 616.395.7145

### Center for Global Engagement

[offcampusstudy@hope.edu](mailto:offcampusstudy@hope.edu) | P. 616.395.7605



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# HOPE RESOURCES

## CENTER FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

109 MMC 616.395.7605 [offcampusstudy@hope.edu](mailto:offcampusstudy@hope.edu)

### ■ CENTER FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Keppel House  
616.395.6760  
[diversity@hope.edu](mailto:diversity@hope.edu)

### ■ COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

203 BSC  
616.395.7945  
Text HOME to 741741

### ■ DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES

261 VZH  
616.395.7925  
[dar@hope.edu](mailto:dar@hope.edu)

### ■ STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

DWT Floor 1  
616.395.7800  
[sdev@hope.edu](mailto:sdev@hope.edu)



+1 616.395.7605



[offcampusstudy@hope.edu](mailto:offcampusstudy@hope.edu)



[travel.hope.edu](http://travel.hope.edu)



Martha Miller Center Rm 109  
Off-Campus Study Library



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