

Best Practices for LGBTQ Students Traveling Abroad

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Study abroad programs have become an integral part of some American college students' experiences. While study abroad can be a time of excitement and exploration, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and otherwise queer college student may face unique challenges during their time abroad. The resources contained in the following pages are meant to be suggestive only and do not claim to represent the "right" or "correct" way to travel. Just as every study abroad program is unique so to the LGBTQ student's identity. This guide seeks to address the special needs and circumstances of LGBTQ student travelers with a specific emphasis on transgender and or gender non-conforming individuals.

Know Before You Go!

- Research the area, program, or university your program will partner with. The International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission is a leading international organization focused on advancing equality on behalf of LGBTQ people. Their site contains up to date information regarding their activities all over the globe. This is a good place to start in order to gain basic information about the climate of a particular region.
 - <https://iglhrc.org/content/information-country>
- Another source for establishing a basic knowledge about the country or region is the Human Rights Watch. This is an organization that publishes reports on human rights violations across the globe. Due to their status as an independent, nongovernmental organization, their photography can at times be graphic. A simple search for "lgbt" or "transgender" in the site's search box will generate a list of ongoing human rights concerns. A country search for the area you program will travel to, through, or near may also be useful in determining safe places to explore in your downtime.
 - <http://www.hrw.org>
- Look into local or national laws to see if they provide legal protections for LGBTQ people. One way to do this is to locate LGBTQ community centers, social groups, and legal organizations to get a feel for the area's climate. Below are links to some of the more traveled areas of the world.
 - <http://londonfriend.org.uk> - London Friend is the United Kingdom's oldest LGBT charities. They facilitate programs, provide resources, and organize social activities in and around the London area.
 - <http://paris.angloinfo.com/information/family/lgbt/> - English language information about Paris, France.
 - <http://www.visitberlin.de/en/category/1520> - Official site by the German government to attract LGBTQ tourists.
 - <http://www.utopia-asia.com/tips.htm> - Provides up to date information for the Pan-Asia region. Includes China, Japan, Thailand, and Australia.
- New York University maintains an exceptional student-to-student LGBT travel guide. As of June 2014 the site covers the cities Berlin, Buenos Aires, Florence, Madrid, Paris, Prague, and Tel Aviv to name a few. This is a great resource for checking out potential

study abroad locations. As this site is based on individual experiences, please be aware they may be written from a particular perspective.

- <http://nyustudentguidelgbt.wordpress.com/about-2/>

Before deciding on a location to study or travel to, make sure enough research is done so that you feel comfortable making an informed decision. If experiencing an LGBTQ pride festival is on your list of must-sees for your study abroad experience, make sure you do not wind up in a country without a festival! The more information you have before you go, the better prepared you will be when you get there!

Things to Consider

Although it is at the end of the acronym, the transgender community is often disproportionately affected by non-inclusive travel policies and procedures. The first important thing for transgender (or trans) student travelers to know is that all travel documents must reflect their current legal name. This is crucial to think through for timing on the part of the student. Depending on where a person is at in their transition or gender expression can make a difference in when to apply for a passport, purchase tickets, and make accommodation reservations.

The National Center for Transgender Equality has put together a “Know Your Rights” guide to help trans people navigate airport security. This document is extremely useful for transgender folks whose gender presentation may not align with their legal name or gender marker. Special attention should be given to the “Body Scanners” and “Pat Downs” sections. Many news reports have emerged detailing negative experiences mostly transgender women have encountered going through airport security. With the introduction full body scanners and heightened security measures at airports, transgender students run the risk of being outed as trans at often times awkward and uncomfortable moments. Knowing your rights regarding pat downs and full body scanners may come in useful if a TSA agent misgenders you and pushes the wrong button on the scanner.

Beyond the uncomfortable security screenings to gain access to the terminal, transgender travelers should also be aware of any rules or regulations concerning medical supplies. Make sure to follow all TSA guidelines regarding prescriptions and be sure to have at least one copy of your prescription in your carry on luggage. It is highly encourage transgender students undergoing hormone replacement therapy alert their health care provider (if they have one) prior to leaving the country. Other than receiving a clean bill of health before leaving for an extended period of time, your doctor may be able to help you coordinate gaining access to the medical treatment and prescriptions you may require abroad. Because drug enforcement laws vary from country to country, it is better to be prepared and have a plan before leaving so hormone replacement therapy is not interrupted. If your hormone therapy requires the use of needles or other sharps, explore your options for small sharps containers or talk to your pharmacist about what they might suggest.

- TSA Special Considerations for Transgender Travelers - <http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/transgender-travelers>
- National Center for Transgender Equality Know Your Rights guide - http://transequality.org/Resources/AirportSecurity_November2013.pdf
- Suggested response if prescriptions for hormone therapy are confiscated - <http://tumblr.transguys.com/post/16728676835/testosterone-plane>
- Example of a travel sharps container



Utilizing the Facilities Abroad

Once you have chosen your destination and successfully traversed airport security the ever-present bathroom situation arrives. Even for a person who passes and does not experience negative feedback or violence while using the restroom, locating gender inclusive facilities can be difficult. If you have a smart phone and are traveling within the United States or Europe, download the REFUGE Restroom app or check out their webpage at www.refugerestrooms.org. You can locate single locking stall or gender inclusive restrooms by putting in your address or allowing your device's GPS navigate you to the closest facility. Other smartphone applications and web based services such as Pee In Peace and Safe2Pee.org also have lists of safe restrooms for trans and gender non-conforming individuals. While these are absolutely phenomenal resources the bathroom locations and reviews are crowd sourced and the directories are built upon users reporting the restroom is gender inclusive.

Locking single stall restrooms may also be labeled with something other than the obvious “multi-gendered restroom” sign.” In older urban spaces such as New York, NY and Paris, France restaurants and shops may only have one bathroom due to space limitations. If you happen to come across one of these restrooms, enjoy the moment, as it is one of the few times bathroom construction benefits trans and gender nonconforming people! On the next page are pictures of various single use restroom signs and configurations one might encounter during a study abroad trip.

Figure 1. The most inclusive restroom sign found online: "Everything Must Be Equal." *Never Yet Melted - All Gender Restrooms*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 June 2014. <<http://neveryetmelted.com/tags/all-gender-restrooms/>>.



Figure 2. Representation of “unisex” or gender neutral restrooms found in New York City.



Figure 3. This image is provided by Joanna Goddard's Cup of Jo blog. The green structure in the photo is called a pisour or urinal. These public urinals are located throughout Amsterdam and Paris. People who are able to pee while standing may find these helpful in order to avoid gender segregated facilities.



Figure 4. Paid public toilets are available sporadically throughout Paris ranging from \$0.50 euro - \$2 euro depending upon the desire length of time.



Figure 5a. Single use restrooms in Amsterdam and Paris are generally marked with a wheelchair to indicate accessibility for mobility needs.



Figure 5b. The interior of the restroom is a standard configuration of restrooms marked “family” or “accessible.” Dutch Resistance Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.



Figure 6. The museums in Paris and Amsterdam are not the only public spaces to have single stalled restrooms. The Charles De Gaulle Airport also has various restroom placards for



Overview

1. Research the location in which you will be traveling in order to identify the climate that exists regarding LGBTQ people and communities.
2. If necessary update government identification and make sure your legal name matches your travel reservations.
3. Know your rights! The Transportation Security Administration has policies in place to serve transgender travelers and many resources are available explaining legal recourse should your rights be violated.
4. Request copies of prescription medication and if sharps are used have a plan in place to collect and/or dispose of sharps and needles.
5. Familiarize yourself with local customs of gendered spaces. Restrooms are often times the most anxiety producing for transgender and gender nonconforming individuals. Consider locating workable restrooms when entering a new space.
6. Have fun! This guide exists to better prepare LGBTQ students for the unique challenges and situations it faces but remember the have fun in the process.
7. If you feel you have been discriminated against for any reason while traveling to or from a study abroad program or while participating in study abroad, please do not hesitate to inform the appropriate contact for your program. Incidents may be reported anonymously or by name at

https://publicdocs.maxient.com/reportingform.php?PurdueUniv&layout_id=14.