

WMU Study Abroad

for Students with Disabilities

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Studying abroad is one of the greatest experiences available to you at Western Michigan University. In addition to earning academic credits that apply to your degree program, studying abroad offers excellent opportunities to expand your cultural and self-awareness; it is also linked to achieving higher GPA's and graduation rates. Additionally, it looks impressive on your resume! **NEVER let your disability discourage you from pursuing a study abroad program!** WMU Study Abroad staff can help you identify suitable programs.



Sevilla, Spain #Z.GSSORIO

Photo Credit: Erin Snoeyink, abroadwithdisabilities.org

Frequently Asked Questions

Why study abroad?

- Earn academic credit toward your degree in a new country and culture.
- Expand cultural understanding of another part of the world, as well as your own by comparison.
- Bolster your resume—set yourself apart from other applicants who lack an international experience.
- Form lasting relationships with people around the globe.
- Increase your self-confidence and self-esteem by navigating life in a new environment.

What are my choices?

- WMU offers many types of study abroad programs, such as:
 - Faculty-led, short-term
 - Exchange
 - Semester or academic year
 - University-approved provider
- WMU offers over 90 programs in more than 40 countries, such as Argentina, China, Germany, and South Africa.
- To search available programs, visit the Study Abroad website: wmich.edu/studyabroad

Can I afford it?

- Some programs cost nearly the same as studying for a semester at WMU, while some are actually cheaper. Study abroad specialists work with students to find programs that fit their academic objectives and budgets.
- Financial aid can be applied to study abroad programs, including the Kalamazoo Promise and the Michigan Education Trust. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) can also be applied if students meet certain requirements.
- There are numerous general scholarships available; there are also many disability-specific scholarships (see page 3).



Photo Credit: Lauren Presutti, CMU

Getting Started and Planning



Getting Started and Planning

To find a program most suitable for you, it is important to keep in mind the following three keys to planning:

3 Keys to Getting Started and Planning

1. Prepare

Meet early with a Study Abroad Specialist (at least one year prior to desired departure) and discuss your disability.

2. Be Specific

When you meet with a Study Abroad Specialist, bring a list of all academic and environmental accommodations/modifications you will need while abroad. Examples of these accommodations/modifications include:

- Extended time on tests
- Test material in alternate format
- Enlarged print or Braille
- Handicap accessible facilities
- Copy of lecture outlines/materials
- FM amplification equipment
- Campus Transportation Referral
- Sign Language interpreters

3. Identify Options

Use the resources included below in combination with meeting with you Study Abroad Specialist to review and identify several program options for you.

Resources



Photo Credit: Lauren Presutti, CMU



Visit the following websites to help identify study abroad program options and to find tips on preparing to study abroad.

Mobility International provides general information and how-to checklists for students with disabilities interested in studying abroad.

<http://www.miusa.org/>

Abroad With Disabilities provides general information and how-to checklists for students with disabilities interested in studying abroad.

<http://www.abroadwithdisabilities.org/>

Disability Rights and Education

Defense outlines the legal measures taken by other countries to protect persons with disabilities

<http://dredf.org/legal-advocacy/international-disability-rights/>

United Nations Enable is the official website of the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SCRPD). It provides public information on international topics related to disabilities.

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

Zero Project offers an interactive map where you can search accessibility indicators as reported by disability services officials in particular countries.

<http://www.zeroproject.org>

Access-Able Travel Source allows students to search “accessible” related infrastructure by country.

<http://www.access-able.com/dBase/index.cfm>

Scholarship Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

- WMU Disability Services for Students Office Scholarship
- 180 Medical Scholarship Program: for students with spinal cord injury, spina bifida, transverse myelitis, or neurogenic bladder
- 1800 wheelchair Scholarship: students who apply must explore mobility issues on campus and/or express personal experiences with such issues
- American Council for the Blind: for students with vision loss
- Christine H Eide Memorial Scholarship: for students who are legally blind
- CIEE Study Abroad/Mobility International
- Council of Citizens with Low Vision International: offers several scholarships for students with low vision and those attending a school with programs for blindness and low vision studies
- Eric Marder Scholarship Program of IDF: for students living with primary immunodeficiency diseases
- Family Epilepsy Scholarship Program: for students living with epilepsy or family/caregivers of a person with epilepsy
- Geoff Brachvogel Memorial Scholarship: for students with RSD, CRPS, or chronic pain
- Incight Education: for any student with a disability
- Lilly Reintegration Scholarship: for students with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, and major depressive disorder
- Michael Yasick ADHD Scholarship: for students with ADHD
- Novotni Scholarship: for students with ADHD
- Patient Advocate Foundation: scholarships for students who have been diagnosed with and/or actively treated for a life threatening illness within the last 5 years
- Proyecto Visión: a bilingual website for youth with disabilities
- Scholarship Trust for the Hearing Impaired: scholarships for areas of need (within education) directly related to hearing loss
- Shire ADHD Scholarship Program: for students diagnosed with ADHD
- The Organization for Autism Research: scholarship for students with Autism
- Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults: scholarships for young adults who have or have had cancer, or have cared for a family member with cancer



Photo Credit: Miusa.org/discover

Meet with Us!

2425 Ellsworth Hall
(2nd Floor)

Information Sessions:

Mondays: 4 p.m.
Tuesdays: 4 p.m.
Wednesdays: 2 p.m.
Thursdays: 9 a.m.
Fridays: 10 a.m.

Walk-in Advising:

Tuesdays: 2:00-4:00 pm
Wednesdays: 10:00 am-Noon
Thursdays: 10:00 am-Noon

Call:

(269) 387-5890

Email:

study-abroad@wmich.edu





Photo Credit: miusa.org/discover

“I believe that all people with disabilities are members of a global family. Working together across borders is our most powerful way of effecting changes.”

- Susan Sygall, CEO, Mobility International USA

“Last year I went to Costa Rica as part of a three-month study abroad experience with many other exchange students from across the United States ... Once I returned to Michigan, many individuals were surprised that despite my disability (vision impaired) I was able to successfully go abroad. I know my situation is not unique and I am an avid believer that students of all abilities should travel abroad.”

- Juanita Lillie
Founding Director
Abroad with Disabilities



Photo Credit: Juanita Lillie, gvsu.edu



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