



Guidance for students with a disability who are considering Study Abroad

Advice for students who have a physical disability, a long-term medical condition, a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) e.g. dyslexia, a sensory impairment or mental health issues.

To enjoy a successful period of study abroad, preparations for any disability-related support that you may need during this time will go a long way to ensuring this. Study Abroad is a wonderful opportunity, so it is important to plan well ahead of your departure date for what you may need while you are away. We hope that these guidance notes will help you with your planning and staff at Nottingham are here to assist you with this.

What do I need to consider as I plan for my Study Abroad?

Think about the ways that your disability or medical condition impacts you in your day-to-day living and in the academic environment. What support do you have around you in Nottingham, both personal and academic; and what resources and strategies do you find helpful?

What is my support network at Nottingham?

This might consist of friends, family, GP and medical team, mental health adviser, counsellor, PA for personal care, Academic Support Tutor, Disability Adviser or University Academic Support Workers. You should inform your Academic Support Tutor/Disability Adviser as soon as you are starting to consider a period of study abroad, to discuss any concerns you may have and to start planning for your support whilst you are abroad.

Most people moving to a new country for any length of time will feel homesick and isolated at some point. Who will you contact if you have any kind of crisis or emergency or if you are worried about something and need to speak to someone? If you have a long term medical condition or mental health problems, such feelings may be more pronounced. It is important to know where to turn to for support if you are struggling. It is also a good idea to establish what formal support services are provided through your host institution, such as Student Disability Services, Student Advice Centre, Counselling Service, Hall Warden, peer mentoring or buddying. There may also be university clubs and societies that you can join, or a Facebook Group for Study Abroad students.

Medical Care and Medication.

You should discuss any specific health or disability related needs with your medical or mental health teams, so that you can develop appropriate strategies to manage them successfully while you are abroad. This may include such things as registering with a doctor and accessing medication and psychological therapies. Some universities may offer a counselling service but many will not. You may therefore need to find out about local services and what costs may be involved.

You will need to establish in good time such things as what types of medical care will be available in your destination country. Is your current medication available in your destination country and who will prescribe it for you? Will you be able to get sufficient quantities of a specific medication from your home GP to last for the duration of your study abroad period or might you need to come back to the UK part way through your time abroad, to obtain further supplies? If you require any ongoing monitoring, how this will be provided and funded in your destination country? What medical insurance will you require in light of any pre-existing medical conditions and health requirements?

Mental health and wellbeing

If you currently have mental health issues or have experienced periods of poor mental health in the past, you should discuss well in advance of your departure date how you are going to manage and maintain your mental health while you are away from many of your familiar support networks. Discuss any concerns well in advance with your whole support network, such as family and friends, medical team, Disability Adviser, University Mental Health Adviser. It is important that you have strategies in place as to where you can go to for support and what to do if you encounter any difficulties. The better prepared you feel, the more confident you will feel in your ability to cope with any problems if they occur.

Accommodation

Find out who is organising this and what type of accommodation is provided by your host institution. Would you prefer to rent privately or live with a host family? Do you have any specific requirements in your accommodation, such as its accessibility, adaptations, en-suite, shared or individual facilities? Also think about its location and proximity to the university campus and any other services, such as transport.

Reasonable Adjustments e.g. exam arrangements, equipment, assistive technology

What do you have in place at the University of Nottingham? If you already have an Academic or Disability Referral Form in place with your School, do any of its recommendations or information need to be reviewed and possibly amended, so that your School can send it on to your host institution before your period of study abroad? You should also be aware that not all universities abroad offer the same range of adjustments and provision as British universities. You may therefore need to check whether your intended host institution can make the adjustments to exam arrangements or supply the equipment that you need and what their medical evidence policy is with regards to this provision.

Who to speak to about my support concerns?

Do not hesitate to discuss your support requirements abroad with your School Study Abroad Coordinator. If you have not already done so you should make contact with Academic or Disability Support, so that you can register with our service and meet with an Academic Support Tutor/ Disability Adviser at as early a stage as possible to discuss your support whilst abroad and get any help with your application. Erasmus funded students may be eligible for additional, disability-related funding; this should be discussed with your Tutor/Adviser.

If you have a Specific Learning Difficulty, such as dyslexia, email:

dyslexia-support@nottingham.ac.uk

If you have a physical disability, mental health condition or long-term medical condition, email:

disability-support@nottingham.ac.uk

Useful Websites

University of Nottingham Study Abroad:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/currentstudents/study-abroad/index.aspx>

University of Nottingham Academic & Disability Support

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/student-services/support/support-for-your-studies/index.aspx>

Erasmus

<https://erasmusplus.org.uk/higher-education-projects>

MIND

Managing student life with a mental health condition

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/a-z-mental-health/>

NAFSA

An American website with a number of articles covering study abroad issues, including disability

<https://www.nafsa.org/>