



SIENA ABROAD IDENTITY SERIES:

GENDER & SEXUALITY

It's important to learn as much as you can about your host country before you go abroad in order to have a positive, successful experience. For LGBTQ+ students, this includes understanding the country's laws and cultural attitudes regarding sexuality and gender identity.

Just like in America, individuals in any country may have different beliefs than you. Some cultures are very open and accepting of LGTBQIA+ people, but others could put students in a hostile situation or even put their safety at risk. Students should become informed by researching the attitudes, customs and laws in the program location they are considering.

questions to consider

About yourself:

- How open will I be about my sexual orientation and gender identity with my teachers, peers, friends, host family and others?
- How prepared do I feel to educate others or answer questions about my identity?
- How might my experience abroad impact my understanding of my identity? How might I want to explore or reflect upon my identity in this new context?

- How important is it to me to find other LGBTQIA+ students and friends while on my program?
- Can my study abroad office or program connect me with other LGBTQ+ students who have studied abroad and are willing to share their experiences?
- What resources are available in my study abroad country for LGBTQIA+ people?
- What are my support systems and how can I connect with them before, during and after my study abroad experience?
- If the country I am studying abroad in does not accept my identity, how will this impact my overall experience abroad and my self-identity?

- What are my safety needs and perceptions and how can they best be met?
- If I utilize health or counseling services at home, will I have access to these resources abroad?
- Will I need access to any medications, e.g. hormone replacement therapy, PrEP, PEP, supplies or services? Are they available in my host country? If not, will I need any additional documentation to travel with my medication or supplies? If yes, will my study abroad health insurance cover the costs?

questions to consider

About your host country:

- What are the cultural attitudes toward sexual orientation and gender identity in my host country?
- What are considered typical male and female social behavior and customary gender relations and social patterns in my host country?
- What are the norms and behavioral expectations within LGBTQIA+ communities in my host country?
- What is the history of LGBTQ+ people within my host country?
- How are LGBTQ+ people socially defined?
- What is the general police attitude toward the local LGBTQ+ community?
- Are there any laws that criminalize same-sex sexual relationships, or ways men and women socially interact?
- What is the attitude of local residents toward people from the U.S., people of other nationalities, “tourists,” and LGBTQIA+ “tourists”?
- What resources or organizations are available in my host country for LGBTQ+ people? Are there any LGBTQ+-friendly establishments near my study abroad program or university? How can I find them?

resources

- [LGBTQI+ Travelers](#) (U.S. Dept of State)
- [IGLTA](#) (travel resources)
- [Equaldex](#) (LGBTQ+ right around the world)
- [PrEPMAP](#) (Asia/Pacific only)
- [LGBTQI Student Guide to Study Abroad](#) (E-book)
- [LGBTQ+ Study Abroad Support](#) (IES Abroad)
- [Queer in the World](#) (blog)
- [7 Tips for Picking the Best LGBTQIA+ Friendly Study Abroad Program](#) (article)
- ["Studying Abroad as an LGBTQ+ Student – Resources and Alumni Experiences"](#) (blog post)
- ["9 Major Life Lessons I Learned Studying Abroad as an LGBT"](#) (blog post)
- ["A Roadmap For The Queer Study Abroad Experience"](#) (blog post)

