



# First Generation Abroad

**GLOBAL  
ENGAGEMENT**

The University of Michigan is committed to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and encourages all Wolverines to go abroad. This resource is provided to help you think critically about cultural attitudes and perceptions surrounding your social identity in a global context. U-M acknowledges that many students relate to multiple identities and welcomes you to use this resource as a tool to explore opportunities abroad.



## Education abroad is possible

Participating in an international experience at U-M is a chance to seek new opportunities, broaden your perspective, and build global competence. U-M offers both short and long-term education abroad programs, ranging from one week to as long as one year. In many cases, an overseas experience can help you fulfill your degree requirements faster than if you were to stay on campus. International experiences can also play an important role in your job search after graduation. Employers are increasingly looking for candidates with the ability to communicate across cultures and effectively work with diverse teams—both skills that can be developed abroad.

## Reflecting on your identities

At U-M, approximately 31% of first-generation students have an international experience. Leveraging this network of student travelers can be a great resource to help you become more aware of new situations you may experience abroad and give you some ideas about how to navigate your specific identities in another culture.

Remember that opportunities to go abroad are available to students of all identities and you are encouraged to engage in an enriching international experience.

## Preparation is key

With careful planning, preparation, and support, you can engage in experiences abroad while maintaining your on-campus and at-home responsibilities. Use the following strategies to plan for your overseas experience:

- **Meet with an education abroad advisor**  
Many schools and colleges offer advising and support for students interested in international experiences. The International Center also helps students find international programs outside of U-M.
- **Take ownership of the process**  
Once you have chosen a program, set yourself up for success by planning as much as you can before you depart. Be sure to keep track of application deadlines, funding opportunities, and program requirements.
- **Make a plan**  
Research your host country, connect with on-campus resources, and plan how you will stay in touch with your support system while away from home.

Explore Education Abroad Opportunities at [global.umich.edu](https://global.umich.edu)

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As you consider and prepare for an international experience, use the following questions to guide you. Keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive list and you may relate to multiple identities. You are encouraged to discuss these topics in-person with an education abroad advisor in your school or college. **The First Generation Student Gateway** and **The Office of Financial Aid** can also provide guidance and resources as you prepare for your experience.

## Questions to consider when exploring going abroad

- When can I fit an international experience into my academic schedule? What type of experience might fit best with my goals?
- What U-M options are there to travel abroad?
- If there are no U-M programs available that fit my interest, budget, or schedule, how will I investigate other education abroad opportunities?
- How might my identity influence where I choose to travel?
- How will I balance being abroad with other opportunities I may have on campus, such as a job, scholarship requirements, and my academic career?
- How can I communicate the value of education abroad to my family?
- What worries might my family have about my international experience, and what information might help them feel more comfortable?
- What is my citizenship status? What effect will this have on my ability to travel?

## Meet with an on-campus advisor

- What opportunities and challenges have other first generation students faced as they prepare to travel abroad?
- How can I be connected with students and alumni with similar identities who have been abroad?
- What on-campus support and resources can I access overseas?
- Will my FAFSA or other U-M funding sources transfer over to my education abroad experience?
- What advice do you have for first-generation students who are thinking about going abroad?
- What impact can going abroad have on my academics and career path?

**Additional resources, including funding, on-and off-campus support, and pre-departure materials can be found on Global Michigan at [www.global.umich.edu](http://www.global.umich.edu).**

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[global.umich.edu](http://global.umich.edu)