



STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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Predeparture Preparation

Advance planning is a key to success

Plan ahead. It takes time to determine if requested accommodations are possible. Without adequate advance notice, unnecessary problems arise and the Study Center or host institution may be unable to consider your needs. Ask key questions about the UCEAP host country; for example, does weather have an effect on your disability?

Communicate early and clearly with UCEAP

U.S. law protects your right to disclose or conceal a disability. However, seriously consider disclosing and documenting a non-apparent disability to receive disability-related accommodations. If you choose to disclose, your UCEAP Advisor on campus will work with you to identify the reasonable accommodations you may need.

Explore options in advance with your Campus EAP Office and the UCEAP Systemwide Office. Be clear about your needs and preferences to minimize miscommunications and assumptions, and be flexible and open regarding accommodations in other countries.

If you are not expecting to use accommodations abroad, it is still important to make potential needs known so that a plan is in place, if needed.

Although UCEAP cannot guarantee the accessibility of UCEAP locations, we can advise you if one of your preferred locations appears to be accessible or recommend an alternate site.

UCEAP can provide information about approximate costs at some UCEAP sites so you can budget to pay for these expenses.

To assess your needs and determine what modifications might be possible, you must work with your UC campus disability office specialist, the Campus EAP Office, and the Operations Specialist at the UCEAP Systemwide Office.

About Confidentiality

Once you disclose a disability, UCEAP will only share information with those who need to know (UCEAP staff on your campus and at the Systemwide Office as well as Study Center/host institution staff).

Be flexible; accommodations differ around the world

Study abroad requires adaptability for people with and without disabilities. Living in a new culture will bring new challenges, including disability services and accessibility standards that might differ significantly from what you are used to in the U.S.

Many disability services that are provided at UC campuses may not be available abroad. UCEAP cannot guarantee that facilities and/or support services will be available at each location abroad in the same range and quality as on a UC campus. Valuable sources of information are UCEAP returnees who can outline potential challenges and adventures at a host country. Also, visit the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange (NCDE), sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and administered by [Mobility International USA](#).



How Accommodations can Differ

- Privacy and discrimination protections available abroad depend on the laws of the host country.
- Tutoring may not be a free service at the host university.
- Notetakers may not be available, or may be very expensive. Using a recording device abroad is often the best solution.
- Budget for any costs associated with accommodations abroad.
- Some countries require detailed health information before issuing visas, which can delay the process.
- Electricity for equipment or recharging batteries may require adapters.
- Treatment for some behavior disorders (ADD, ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome, etc.) may differ.
- Sign language interpreters may not be certified or available at all times, and interpreting will generally be in the sign language of the country rather than ASL.
- Some countries quarantine guide dogs before they are allowed into the country.
- Bring mobility aids to use in restrooms without bars or on long train platforms. Safety bars and shower chairs may also be uncommon.
- In some countries the standard width of a wheelchair is narrower than U.S. standards, and non-folding wheelchairs and power chairs are extremely rare. The standard width of corridors varies in different countries and not all buildings are accessible.
- Carry extra spare parts or differing types of casters for a wheelchair.
- In some countries, assistive technology may be used more, while in others you may need to rely on human resources.
- Read about disability laws in the host country, talk to someone with a disability similar to yours, and consider geography, climate, and culture when considering how accessible the country is.

Submit Critical Documentation

At your request, the Disabled Student's Office will write a letter documenting your disability and/or accommodation needs. The UCEAP Systemwide Office will share this letter with the UCEAP Study Center and/or host institution. Special accommodations cannot be researched or obtained without this letter. Keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Bring a copy of your medical documentation abroad, including prescription information. Leave a copy with your parent or guardian in the event that your copy is lost or damaged.

Know how you will pay for accommodations

UCEAP is part of the University of California and is bound by all laws that affect the University of California. The Office of Civil Rights has opined that Section 504 and Title II do not apply extra-territorially. In addition, the State of California does not mandate that the University of California fund disability accommodations for students who study outside the U.S.

You must be aware that:

- Federal and state laws do not require UC to provide funding for accommodations and/or facilities beyond U.S. borders.
- It is your responsibility to assure that any funding you require for special services abroad is arranged well in advance.
- You are responsible to finance accommodations abroad. If you receive funding from the Department of Rehabilitation, have the Rehabilitation Representative contact the UCEAP Student Finance Analyst for your program to process payments.



Potential Issues for Students with Disabilities

Dominant viewpoints of the host culture will influence your experience

Views on disabilities, independence, confidentiality, respect for authority, and individual rights differ from country to country, and these views will definitely affect your experience. Learning disabilities may not be recognized in some countries; be prepared for the fact that a disability may be culturally defined.

You may face some complications. In some cases, people may not feel you can function, and others may try to do things for you instead of letting you do them yourself. In some cultures, locals may be blunt and direct in asking you about your disability. In some countries, there may be very little infrastructure to accommodate people with disabilities. Some people hold prejudicial attitudes about individuals with disabilities and may act in a way that may appear as discrimination against you.

Public transportation in the UCEAP host country

Before participating, it is imperative you learn about accessible transportation resources or community support within a host country. Not all forms of transportation may be accessible within your UCEAP host country.

Know whether you will need travel accommodations during travels within the city and between destinations.

Budget adequately to cover your transportation costs (e.g., taxis, if public transportation is inaccessible or inadequate).

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Security Checks

TSA has established a program for screening of persons with disabilities and their associated equipment, mobility aids, and devices. Their program covers all categories of disabilities (mobility, hearing, visual, and hidden). Learn more on the [TSA website](#).

Overall guidance for travelers with disabilities is located on the Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration website at: www.tsa.gov. This guidance includes specific tips by disability/medical condition.

If you have additional concerns or questions you can also contact TSA's Call Center at 1-866-289-9673 or by e-mail at tsa-contactcenter@dhs.gov

For concerns about potential civil rights violations, you can contact TSA's Office of Civil Rights at 1-877-336-4872, TTY 800-877-8339 or by e-mail at tsa-contactcenter@dhs.gov

Questions to ask as you prepare for UCEAP

Processing Disabilities (LD, ADHD, Psychological, Brain injuries)

- Will you need note takers for class?
- What are the partner institution's policies on extended exam time?
- Is the partner institution willing to authorize your usual test accommodations based on American medical documentation?
- What tutoring services might be available and at what cost?
- If you need to see a doctor or therapist for psychological concerns while abroad, have you established this contact prior to departure?
- Have you considered bringing a personal recording device for lectures? Do you have permission to record lectures?
- Are books available on tape or CD?
- Who will fund any special accommodations?



Chronic Systemic Disorders

- If you have respiratory problems or severe allergies, what is the air and environmental quality in the city you are considering?
- If your condition is affected by temperatures, what is the climate in your prospective host city?
- What prior notification has been given to the instructors regarding potential absences should your condition flare up unexpectedly?
- Will you need extended time on assignments?
- If you normally receive test accommodations, do you have authorization through the partner institution to receive the same accommodations there?
- What special dietary considerations might you have?
- If there are extra expenses associated with special accommodations, how will you pay for them?

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Will you need an interpreter or Realtime Captioning? Who will fund this accommodation?
- Where/how will the interpreter be hired?
- What is the hourly rate for interpreters in the host country? (Note that interpreter costs vary widely by country and even within the same country.)
- Does the interpreter know American Sign Language? Sign language is not universal and may differ between countries that have the same spoken language. Find out the differences before leaving. It may be possible to depart early to learn the new sign language.
- If you are taking a personal FM system, can you obtain batteries in your host country that work for your device?
- Who will notify your instructor of the need to wear the FM microphone?
- Will you need a note taker?
- Are captioned videos available?
- How will you pay for accommodations?

Mobility/Orthopedic Disabilities

- Will you take one or two wheelchairs? Electric or manual?
- Do you need a transformer? Is the voltage in your host country compatible with your transformer?
- How will you ship your chair abroad?
- Where can your chair be repaired abroad?
- Do you need to make additional arrangements to get from the airport to the orientation site or to your partner institution?
- Are the streets and/or sidewalks paved or cobblestone? Are there curb cuts for wheelchair access?
- What is the accessibility of the partner institution and city (elevators, bathrooms, classrooms, housing, transportation, etc.)?
- Is voice recognition software available?
- Will you need note takers, scribes, or transcribers?
- What kind of field trips might your program go on? Are they accessible?
- Are lab or library assistants available in your host country?
- Do you need extended time on assignments or exams?
- How will you pay for accommodations?



Visual Impairments

- Have you contacted the consulate of your host country to determine if you will need to put your guide dog in quarantine?
- Will special housing or food arrangements be necessary for your dog? Is your dog allowed into the classroom?
- Are alternate formats (books on tape, Braille, e-text, scanning, CCTV, etc.) available?
- Will you need a mobility assistant to help you?
- Have you obtained maps of your host city and enlarged them to become familiar with directions before departure?
- What kind of test accommodations will you need?
- Is there Braille signage on buildings, elevators, classroom, ATMs, etc.?
- Will you have access to computer software in order to write papers or read assignments?
- How will you pay for accommodations?

Housing and Living Situations

- What options are available through the program(s)? Is it possible to get a single room? A first-floor room?
- Are the room dimensions physically accessible to individual needs?
- What are the sleeping arrangements like?
- Are there accessible bathroom and shower facilities within any of the housing options? If not, how can UCEAP address these accessibility issues?

Auxiliary Aids or Assistive Devices

- Are replacement parts for auxiliary aids going to be readily available in the event damage occurs?
- Is there access to agencies or professionals who can repair auxiliary aids, if necessary?

Psychological Disabilities

- What could you expect living in a different country?
- How would you get a three-month supply of medication? Is your medication legal? What if your symptoms flare up while abroad and you need help?

Resources to help you plan for study abroad

- [Access Abroad at the University of Minnesota](#)
- [Mobility International USA \(MIUSA\)](#)
- [National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange \(NCDE\)](#)



Once Abroad

If you decide not to disclose your accommodation needs in advance

Be aware that accommodations may not be easily or quickly arranged, without advance notice or time for preparations. This is why it is best to disclose your accommodation needs to UCEAP staff in the U.S. before departure. If you do request accommodations, follow up with staff in the UCEAP host country after arrival.

Know who to contact if accommodations are not working while abroad

Before departure, be certain that you have the contact information for the host university disability office or the local UCEAP representative. If you arrive and requested accommodations are not in place, you need to contact the local office. Do not delay contacting someone. If you do not have a local contact, e-mail your Campus EAP Advisor or the UCEAP Operations Specialist.

Take ownership of your disability

Know how you can accommodate your own needs. For example, memorize bus routes and identify people willing to assist or support you informally with shopping, monitoring changes in your condition, or keeping you on schedule.

It is important to prepare yourself because reality can be different from what you may have read before departure. For example, in theory, every metro station may have an elevator, but you will not know how many are in working condition until you get there.

Allow yourself to accept assistance from others and anticipate differences

An institution abroad may or may not be adequately equipped to service students with disabilities. If accommodations are not what you expected, it is important to know how to be flexible and seek help. Learn how to ask for help and refer to your disability in the local language.

If you can't find a personal coach, AA meeting, or therapist abroad, access them remotely by Internet or telephone (plan ahead and make sure that this is possible before your departure). If readers and scribes are unavailable, mail order audio or Braille books through your campus Disability Services Offices or bring assistive technology and software from the U.S.