

Off-Campus Study | How to Use Resource Health, Disabilities, & Academic Accommodations

Off-Campus Study Considerations

The [Off-Campus Study Considerations - Health, Disabilities, & Academic Accommodations](#) resource provides valuable considerations for **students thinking about studying off-campus**. It offers ideas on what factors to consider, such as accessibility, healthcare, and available accommodations, to help students make informed decisions. While the guide highlights important aspects to think about, students are responsible for conducting the necessary research on specific locations and programs to ensure their needs are met.

Off-Campus Study Pre-Departure Checklist

The [Off-Campus Study Pre-Departure Checklist - Health, Disabilities, & Academic Accommodations](#) resource is designed for **students who have already chosen their location and program**. It helps them prepare for their off-campus experience by highlighting key factors to consider and tasks to complete before departing. This section provides guidance on understanding available resources and accommodations abroad, and prompts students to think about important variables related to health, accessibility, and academic support to ensure a smooth and successful term.

Off-Campus Study Considerations

Health, Disabilities, & Academic Accommodations

Studying off-campus is an incredible opportunity for you to experience new cultures, challenge yourself, and grow in ways you never imagined. With the right preparation, you can have an enriching, fulfilling academic experience. There are resources and support systems in place to assist you, from accessible housing and transportation to academic accommodations, and mental and physical health services. An off-campus study journey will not only broaden your academic and professional horizons, but it will also empower you to navigate the world with confidence and resilience. Embrace the adventure - off-campus study can be an amazing part of your Hope College experience!

Considerations

Research Off-Campus Study Locations

- Discover program locations:** Reference travel.hope.edu for countries and cities that have Hope College-approved off-campus study programs.
- Choose a destination:** Research potential cities and countries.
 - Resources:**
 - [Country Laws: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Disability](#)
 - [Country Information: Travel.State.Gov Learn About Your Destination](#)
 - Healthcare systems:** Research availability, quality, and accessibility of healthcare services, including specialists, [medications](#), and mental health support.
 - Accessible transport options:** Research accessible transportation options in your host city and country, such as public transit, taxis, or shuttles for individuals with disabilities.
 - Infrastructure:** Research the local infrastructure and how it may impact mobility (e.g., sidewalks, talking crosswalk signs). Tip: Use Google Maps in Street View to virtually traverse the surroundings.
 - Diet:** Research the local cuisine and foods.
 - Cultural attitudes:** Research the cultural attitudes toward disability and health.
- Know your rights:** Understand your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), [Air Carrier Access Act \(ACAA\)](#), or other relevant legislation, depending on the destination. Note that ADA and ACAA are not applicable outside of the United States of America (USA).
 - Accessibility and accommodations:** Research facility accessibility (e.g., ramps, elevators, and bathrooms) and accommodations (e.g., air conditioning, and central heating). Historical sights and buildings are likely less accessible and may not have the same accommodations customary in the USA.
 - Medical equipment:** Determine what medical equipment is needed to be healthy and successful during a semester off-campus. Research laws and public institution rules, and be prepared to advocate. Example: In Greece, larger bags are not always allowed in museums.

- Service or Emotional Support Animal:** Research laws and cultural norms about service and emotional support animals. Note possible quarantine time and that emotional support animals are not common in other countries.

Research Off-Campus Study Programs

- Contact program advisors:** Early and open communication regarding your needs will ensure that both you and your host program are prepared.
- Confirm accommodation availability:** Verify if the program can accommodate your health, disability, or academic needs (e.g., tutoring, physical accessibility, mental health services).
 - Service or Emotional Support Animal:** Understand program provider policies and requirements.
- Housing options:** Inquire about housing opportunities (e.g., apartment, dorm, homestay). Advocate for your needs (e.g., air conditioning, elevator, Celiac-compliant kitchen).

Medical & Health

- Consult your healthcare provider(s):** Discuss the implications of traveling with any pre-existing conditions.
- Update prescriptions and medications:** Make sure you will have access to medication for the duration of your stay, and check if it's available in the host country. Note that some medications are not permitted in other countries (e.g., Adderall), and discuss this with your healthcare provider.

Accessibility & Disability Resources

- Contact disability services:** Connect with Hope College departments.
 - Center for Global Engagement to discuss your plans to study off-campus.
 - Disability and Accessibility Resources (DAR) to discuss accommodations.
 - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to plan continued treatment.
- Inquire about local disability resources:** Research support systems and any local disability advocacy organizations in your destination.
- Consider acquiring the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard](#):** This simple tool allows you to voluntarily share that you have a disability or condition that may not be immediately apparent – and that you may need a helping hand, understanding, or more time in shops, at work, on transport, or in public spaces.
 - [Discover Sunflower-friendly places.](#)

Off-Campus Study Pre-Departure Checklist Health, Disabilities, & Academic Accommodations

Off-Campus Study Program

Provider & Program Name	
Program Advisor	

Pre-Departure Checklist

Medical & Health

- Update prescriptions and medications:** Make sure you have enough medication for the duration of your stay, and check if it's available in the host country. Note that some medications are not permitted in other countries (e.g., Adderall).
- Medical insurance:** Ensure you have adequate international health insurance that covers emergencies, hospital visits, and prescribed medications. Review policy coverage of your personal medical insurance and the program's medical insurance.
- Emergency plan:** Create a medical emergency plan with your doctor and your family, including hospitals and medical facilities in your host location.
- Language considerations:** Learn key terms related to your health or disability in the local language, or arrange for a translator if necessary.
 - Medical ID card:** Students have made personalized emergency medical cards including information such as full name, citizenship, study abroad program, medications, medical conditions, allergies, insurance policies, and emergency numbers. Tip: Consider laminating and having it translated into the appropriate host language.

Mental Health & Well-being

- Mental health resources:** Research local counseling and mental health services to ensure you have access to these services. Note that most program providers have a contact list of local English-speaking practitioners.
- Connect with support groups:** Look for local or online groups to find students with similar health or disability experiences.
- Communication plan:** Set up regular check-ins with family, friends, or a counselor to maintain mental health support.

Laws & Documentation

- Disability documentation:** Prepare any necessary documents related to your accommodations, and be ready to submit them to your program coordinator and local institutions.
- Visa requirements:** Check if your disability or health condition requires specific visa accommodations, such as a service animal.

Academic Accommodations

- Communicate with the program manager:** Contact the program provider to set up academic accommodations in advance. Ensure that accommodations, such as extra time for assignments or exam adjustments, will be provided. Note that the program provider may request a copy of your DAR Accommodation Letter.
- Prepare for different academic environments:** Understand the differences between coursework expectations and grading. Often while studying off-campus students have less homework, and exams or papers are a higher percentage of their cumulative grade.

Transportation & Mobility

- Travel assistance:** Contact the airline or travel provider to arrange necessary assistance during flights or layovers. Prepare to transport mobility aids and consider wearing the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#) lanyard and/or [TSA Disability Notification Card](#).
- Travel insurance:** Obtain insurance that covers pre-existing conditions and disability-related needs (e.g., durable medical equipment).
- Navigating the area:** Learn about local facilities such as ramps, elevators, or public bathrooms that may accommodate your needs. Helpful resources include [Sociability](#) and Google Maps.

Financial Planning

- Budget for accommodations and support:** Allocate funds for any additional costs related to health or disability accommodations, medical expenses, or special transportation.
- Scholarships & financial aid:** Check if there are specific scholarships available for students with disabilities or health-related needs from your provider.

Preparing for the Unexpected

- Contingency plans:** Create a backup plan in case accommodations or resources are unavailable or insufficient in the host country.
- Stay organized:** Keep copies of all important documents (health records, prescriptions, emergency contact info, insurance details) in both digital and physical formats. Remember to bring this information when traveling within and out of the host country.