

Access Abroad: Site Accessibility Questionnaire

The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates equal access to US university programs for students with disabilities. As a result, study abroad programs are gathering information from overseas sites in order to advise students on accommodation possibilities. This Site Accessibility Questionnaire is designed to help study abroad advisers get a general idea of a site's physical and programmatic accessibility and can easily be completed during a routine site visit.

In many cases, an overseas program may not have typical types of accessibility, but creative solutions may enable a student to participate even if the physical environment is more limited. When responding to the questions below, consider how flexible and willing the site might be to discussing creative solutions to typical disability accommodations.

This brief questionnaire is intended to be used as a tool when time and resources are limited. If time permits, sites should be strongly encouraged to complete an Access Assessment, which includes definitions of disabilities and specific accommodations, in order for the US institution to obtain more comprehensive accessibility information to share with students.

General Access/Background Information

1. What campus or city disability-related offices are available to assist a student with a disability? How receptive are they to working with US students with disabilities?
2. What is your sense of overall cultural attitudes about people with disabilities? Are some disabilities recognized while others are not?
3. What has been your experience with students with disabilities on your program? What are your concerns about hosting students with disabilities?
4. What kinds of health care facilities are available for students who need medication? For psychological counseling? Are these services available in English?
5. What resources on accessibility are you aware of at your institution or in your community (e.g. organizations, publications)? Obtain sample brochures/documents if possible.

(over)

Physical Access

1. Are the classrooms, housing, food services, and library on the ground floor, or is there an elevator available? Could classes be relocated to the ground floor, if necessary?
2. *Are there accessible bathrooms in key areas, e.g. classrooms, housing, food services, library?
3. Are there ramps for wheelchair users to circumvent steps and uneven ground?
4. What possibilities exist for providing housing accommodations for a student with a disability?
5. How far must students travel between classrooms, housing, food services, and library? What forms of accessible transportation are available on campus or in the community?
6. Are there curb cuts on the streets in key areas to allow wheelchair users to access sidewalks?
7. Are there traffic signals at cross walks to control the pace of traffic? Are there auditory signals at cross walks?

Programmatic Access

1. How available are overseas staff to provide assistance (e.g. notetaking, reading) when necessary? What other options might exist to provide such assistance?
2. What accommodations could be made for a student with a learning disability who needs extra time on tests or a quiet space to take exams?
3. If a student needs to take a reduced workload or allocate periods of time each day for rest, would this be feasible?
4. What types of technology/special equipment (computer labs, tape recorders, scanner, braille printer) can be made available to students on the program?
5. Are there mandatory excursions? Would these be accessible to a disabled student?
6. What other considerations should a student with a disability keep in mind about your program or your site?

**Wheelchair-accessible by American electric wheelchair standards is usually defined as having a clearance of 3 feet (92cm) for doorways and 5 feet (152cm) diameter turning space. Additional specifics on physical accessibility are available upon request (email Barbara Blacklock at black005@umn.edu).*