



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Student
Services
Department.

Planning for Time Abroad: Taking Care of Yourself

Spending a period abroad is the most fantastic opportunity and one that we warmly encourage as many students as possible to take up. Now that you have decided that you want to go abroad as part of your degree*, we strongly advise you to plan for your wellbeing away from Sheffield. It is your responsibility to do this but staff at the University of Sheffield are here to work with you to ensure that your experience is as beneficial and positive as possible. Remember that not everywhere has the same kind or level of support available.

All students should be aware of issues relating to working within a different culture and away from their normal support and friendship networks. Some have additional needs which may need some additional preparation.

We would like you to think about how you manage situations now and where you might need to plan for a different way of managing when you are away. You should start work on this now. You could take this sheet to service providers (e.g. counselling, GP, study abroad tutor) in Sheffield to help you discuss and plan.

*Volunteering or working abroad in vacations

The University does not provide support for activities that are not part of your studies. However, there is information here to help you plan your time abroad.

Please make notes on this table to help you plan for your time abroad

	What support do you currently have?	Things to think about/plan for	Action points, contact/web details etc.	What do I anticipate being in place for me while I'm abroad
Relationship problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends and family Counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can I resolve any issues before I leave? Can counselling help me learn to manage my anxiety/ unhappiness about this issue? Can I learn any strategies to make new relationships easier? 		
Adapting to a new culture – acultural stress, homesickness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your whole life experience! Day to day support networks e.g. friends, family, student societies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How aware are you of your own culture? What might culture shock be like? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to international students here about cultural differences Attend cultural awareness training in Sheffield (organised by Global Opportunities & Exchanges team) Read about how your culture is perceived e.g. "The Xenophobe's Guide" series, "Watching the English", Kate Fox Talk to students who have been to your selected country to find out what they experienced www.sheffield.ac.uk/globalopps/seap 	
Physical disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptations to accommodation – e.g. visual fire alarm, accessible shower Specialist equipment for studies – software, suitable chair Note-taker, sign language interpreter, amanuensis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for any specialist equipment or support I might need. * 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See your disability adviser as soon as you can to talk about your plans. * Is funding available through Erasmus? From the University of Sheffield? * Collate all documentation relating to support in Sheffield to help explain and negotiate exam times etc. * For advice about preparing for travelling abroad, see www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-for-disabled-people Find some useful links and articles at www.thirdyearabroad.com/advice-and-tips/year-abroad-with-a-disability 	
Long term physical health difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special diet Regular GP or clinic appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is my medication available there? How much will it cost? How much can I take with me? Is it legal to use there? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to your GP/specialist about this at your next appointment. See your disability adviser as soon as you can to talk about your plans. * 	
Mental health difficulties, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depression, low mood, Anxiety, Eating disorders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medication? Counselling? Regular GP appointments? External psychiatric support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is my medication available there? How much will it cost? (You can't take more than 3 months supply with you) Will I have access to talking therapies, such as counselling? If not what access will I have to my current support? What alternative support, e.g. online, can I look into? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to your GP, psychiatric support, counsellor as soon as you can. See your mental health adviser or disability adviser as soon as you can to talk about your plans. * www.befrienders.org – contact details for Samaritans and other organisations in many countries Big White Wall – ask doctor, counsellor etc. or see www.bigwhitewall.com 	
ASD, such as Aspergers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor? Group support? Family? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will they have experience of students with ASD? Can I contact my Sheffield advisers while I'm away? * 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See your disability adviser as soon as you can to talk about your plans. Collate all documentation relating to diagnosis and support in Sheffield to help explain and negotiate exam times etc. 	
Financial problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bursary? Access to Learning Funds from University Part-time work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will your basic cost of living be higher when abroad? Are you allowed to work there? Is there work available? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Support Funds: www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/finance/application * Investigate funding opportunities: www.sheffield.ac.uk/studyabroad/sheffield * Talk to the Global Opportunities & Exchanges team if your period abroad is being organised through them. * Email financialhelp@sheffield.ac.uk for financial help / support whilst overseas. * 	
Faith community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kosher/halal meat? Vegetarian diet? Religious holidays – time off? Hospitality? Place of worship/ fellow worshippers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will I find my faith community there? Can I dress according to religious custom as I do here? What is the social view of my faith group there? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Your minister of religion 	
LGBT community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union Society Social venues/activities Equality legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the legal situation there? How can I prepare for different social or legal situations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to starting points and Sheffield students' experiences www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/student/lgbt/studyabroad Ithaca College - comprehensive guidance on "things to think about" www.ithaca.edu/oip/docs/diversity/lgbt_students_and_sa.pdf www.ilga.org for details of LGBT and rights around the world See www.rainbow-europe.org for info about the legal, political and social situation in Europe 	
Gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality legislation Social acceptance (generally) of rights regarding dress, employment etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I prepare for different social or legal situations? Will I need to dress differently in some situations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to students who have been to your selected country to find out what they experienced www.sheffield.ac.uk/globalopps/seap 	
Political issues		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are high levels of anxiety about terrorism and extremism across the world. What is the situation where you will be about discussing or engaging with controversial groups or individuals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check UK Government web pages www.gov.uk/fco Check your host university website (if studying abroad) 	

*Not applicable if you are not on a University placement

Things to think about

You probably take for granted some of the support that you have in the form of your close friends, family, partner, your GP, maybe a counsellor, a faith community etc. Think about how you will manage with thousands of miles between you and that support and start planning for the different ways you will need to manage and thrive.

If you have a disability, legal and social requirements in the UK may accommodate many of the adjustments needed to give you equal access – physical and otherwise – to learning, social activities, everyday living. You may need to plan this for your time abroad as legislation, attitudes and common practice are likely to be different. Women students in particular may find that attitudes can be different and require thinking about.

Legislation and social attitudes to the LGBT community vary widely throughout the countries to which our students go. If you want to be part of that community overseas, you could do some research in advance.

Even if you are spending time abroad as part of your course, check that you have insurance for health, return home in an emergency etc.

We have listed some areas to think about with a few examples of possible actions. You can enter your own action points too. Please look through this information and follow up any of the suggestions that might benefit you during your time abroad. Don't forget that there is a great resource on your doorstep; not only will there be people from your department who have gone before you, but there are probably students from your selected country registered in the University of Sheffield. Students going abroad through the Global Opportunities & Exchanges team can ask for ways of contacting them through there. Any student can email international.students@sheffield.ac.uk to ask to make contact with students from that country.

Use this space to jot down useful contact numbers:

Staying safe abroad

This starts before you go. In the current climate, it is hard to predict where there might be risks. You can plan what you need to do if an emergency should arise. Check www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo for foreign travel advice.

Plan and follow these tips to help keep you safe:

- Get to know the location and contact details of support services (e.g. in your host university or employer) where you are.
- Make a note of the contact details of the British Embassy/High Commission/Consulate where you are.
- Check your Sheffield and host university email accounts regularly.
- Check the University of Sheffield's incident page www.sheffield.ac.uk/incidents for information in case there is an emergency situation near your University of Sheffield placement.
- In an emergency situation, use Facebook "check-in" facility to let people know you are safe.
- If you are working/volunteering abroad independently, make sure you have funds to leave in an emergency.
- Email support@sheffield.ac.uk for access to Sheffield's services.

Travel to high risk areas or areas of high concern in vacations

We do not recommend that you travel to high risk areas. If you choose to spend time in such areas, please consider all of the information in this leaflet plus:

- We assume that you have ensured that your trip will not be terrorism-crime or extremist-related BUT is it possible or probable that UK or other countries' security services might think your trip is related to criminal and/or extremist activity? If so:
 - › Check out before you travel that the organisation/employer is bona fide. Seek guidance from Careers Service, Multi-Faith Chaplaincy team etc.
 - › Carry in hand luggage:
 - all documentation relating to your employer or the volunteer organisation
 - evidence of return travel plans
 - evidence of home address and University registration
 - › Consider who you can talk to if you want /need to leave your place of work/volunteering.



Useful web pages at The University of Sheffield

University Health Service

www.sheffield.ac.uk/health

Counselling Service

www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/counselling
www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/counselling/self

Disability and Dyslexia Service

www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/disability

Things not going right...

www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/sos

International Student Support

www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/international

Well-Connected

www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/well-connected

Big White Wall

On-line resource, currently free to all students using University of Sheffield email address
www.bigwhitewall.com