



## Studying Abroad with a Disability Checklist

### When thinking about study abroad...

#### Do your research before you apply to study abroad

- **Initiate discussions early** and talk with the disability support office at your host university about how your host country's culture understands your condition and how receptive that country might be to providing accommodations. Other countries may have other means of understanding and accommodating your condition.
- Research what kind of **documentation you might need** to register with their disability services. These might include documentation from your health professional or Disability Adviser on letterheads.
- Keep in mind you may need to see a health professional in your host country to **formally recognise your condition** as well.

### Things to consider about your host university...

#### Academic Accommodations

- It is highly recommended that students who will require accommodations in study and assessment should **contact the university before lodging an application to study abroad** to find out what kind of supports are available – this could even mean getting in contact a year in advance.
- If your condition is something you would declare here at Monash as it impacts your ability to study effectively, it is **advisable to also declare it at your host university**.
- When you register with the disability support office at your host university, ask about disclosing your condition to your lecturers. What are the processes?
- Check to see if the same accommodations that you use at Monash be available at your host university (e.g. document conversion, note takers, exam arrangements)

- You may have to **be flexible and think about different ways your condition can be accommodated for** – if your host university does not offer the same kinds of supports are there local agencies or volunteer groups who might be able to assist?

### Finance

- Although the university fees you pay abroad are the same as those that you pay here, there may be other out-of-pocket costs that add up, especially if you have extra requirements that your host university does not provide.
- Do some research on **scholarships and grants specifically for students with disabilities studying abroad**.

### Other university services

- If required, check if you will be able to access the **university's counselling and medical services**, and if there are any additional costs involved.

### Housing and Accommodation

- If you are going to be living on the university's campus, check how accessible it is for your requirements, such as **accessible bathrooms and shower facilities**? Will you be sharing a room?
- What kind of **off campus accommodations** are available, and how accessible are they?

### Prescription Medication

- Check to see if it is possible to take **enough medication to last your entire stay** abroad. Remember, it is illegal to have any medication sent abroad via post.
- **Always carry medication in carry-on luggage** in case your checked luggage is delayed or lost.
- Medication should be **stored in their original containers and you should take a prescription and signed letter from your health professional** (on their stationery).
- If it is possible to take your prescription and letter from your health professional to an English speaking health professional in your host country to get a local prescription:
  - **Prescriptions may need to be translated**, be sure these are accurately completed.
  - Do not forget to make sure the **proper dosage** you need exists in the host country.

## Travel Essentials...

### Travel Insurance

- Many travel insurance companies **will not agree to cover “pre-existing conditions”**, many of which could be considered a disability. The nature of these conditions depends on the insurance company.
- Some companies will offer a **medical screening** to determine whether or not they will cover you.
- There are some companies, such as [Fish Insurance](#), which **specialise in travel insurance for people with disabilities**. Do your research and make sure you talk to someone about the kind of coverage you will be able to get.
- **You do have rights** if you feel that your insurance company is unfairly discriminating against you because of your disability. The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) includes insurance. See the Australian Human Rights Commission website for [Guidelines for Insurers](#) (see section 5.1) and [FAQs](#).

### Airline Accommodations

- Most major airlines have **Disability Access Facilitation Plans** in place for anyone who requires assistance with mobility:
  - [Virgin](#)
  - [Tiger](#)
  - [Qantas](#)
  - [Melbourne Airport](#)
- Check all relevant **airline and airport websites** before you travel.
- Don't be afraid to ask for assistance if you need it.

### Getting around

- What kinds of **travel accommodations** will be required during travels around the university, within the city as well as between destinations?
- Check out **accessible transportation resources** or community support in your host country.
- Are the costs of **private taxis** feasible, if public transportation is inaccessible?
- If it becomes expensive to transport mobility aids such as a wheelchair or scooter, consider options such as hiring one abroad.

## Other tips...

- **Don't be afraid to participate** in extracurricular activities or explore your host country – you'll just need to be prepared and organised.
- Ensure you have all relevant **emergency (host and home) contacts** with you at all times
- It's **ok to ask for assistance** or to express your requirements.
- **Be flexible** – you might have to think of new or different ways to do things.
- **Know your stuff**- this means your medication, your equipment specifications, guide dog laws etc.
- **Get organised early!** Some accommodations can take time to put into place, so it's best to be prepared.
- **Have fun!** That's what you're there for, really.

## Some helpful resources

- [Mobility International USA](#)
- [Access-Able Travel Source](#)
- [Global Access News](#)