Preparing to Study Abroad

Before you leave the US, we encourage you to learn as much as possible about the country where you plan to study. Allow time to consider how your race or ethnicity may influence your encounters abroad. Just as there is discrimination and racial prejudice in the United States, there may be similar cultural elements in the country where you’ll be living. How might you be perceived in this society and could this influence people’s interactions with you? What disadvantages and privileges are associated with race and ethnicity in the host culture? Speak with your UK Education Abroad advisor about these questions so that we can assist you in gathering the information you need.

Campus Resources

Martin Luther King, Jr. Cultural Center
313 Blazer Hall
uky.edu/MLKCC
859.257.4130

Office for Institutional Diversity
311 Main Building
uky.edu/diversity
vpid@uky.edu

First Step Info Sessions

Monday & Tuesday at 4pm
Wednesday & Thursday at 3pm
207 Bradley Hall

Race, Ethnicity, and Education Abroad

For more information contact the Education Abroad office.

Chat with Education Abroad Peer Ambassadors in 315 Bradley Hall and share any questions or concerns you may have about being abroad.

Contents in this brochure have been adapted from Penn State publications by Anthony Ogden
MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY & STUDY ABROAD

The University of Kentucky has long demonstrated a commitment to diversity and equity that is deeply rooted in both our historic mission and our philosophy of higher education. The University strives to maintain an environment free of discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The broad range of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds inherent in multicultural diversity create rich learning communities from which all students have the opportunity to benefit.

We are committed to offering education abroad experiences to all students and recognize that education abroad is not just a student focused experience but rather a holistic, intercultural one. Understanding how these perceptions can influence your study abroad experience can go a long way toward better understanding yourself and the new culture in which you’ll be living.

It is important to recognize how cultural differences impact perceptions of race and ethnicity. Regardless of your destination, begin now by researching how race and ethnicity are understood and defined within the society. Take the opportunity to understand the social & historical foundation for ethnic & racial tolerance. You can alleviate potential misunderstandings by learning in advance as much as you can about the culture where you’ll be living. Please discuss your questions & concerns about this or any other issue with your Education Abroad advisor.

WHILE LIVING & STUDYING ABROAD

While abroad, you will likely have encounters that challenge your preconceived definitions of racism and prejudice. These interactions will allow you to explore culturally specific stereotypes and views of acceptance and tolerance. During your time abroad, you may examine your own values and beliefs and may arrive at a better understanding of yourself. Take advantage of this experience abroad to understand how people in the host culture define racism and prejudice and how they choose to respond to it. Who are the minority populations in this culture and how might you connect with them? Do you know the laws related to racial discrimination in the host country? Will you be a minority in this culture? If so, how might this influence your engagement with the local culture? Will you be a member of a majority for the first time?

BRINGING THE EXPERIENCE HOME

Preparing for your return home is as important as preparing for your departure. Give thought to what you have gained from this experience. What have you learned while abroad and how will you use the experience later on? Did study abroad allow you to pursue new research or have an internship? Compare your pre-departure goals. Are you interested in sharing your experience with others? Before you return to the US it is helpful to consider how changes in your self identity may affect your relationship with family and friends back home.