

Diversity Guide to Study Abroad

For most students, study abroad is an amazing and sometimes life changing experiences. But just like life at your home school, you may encounter some discrimination on your travels. For some students when they study abroad it will be the first time they will be in the position of being a minority.

Although you might be a minority in your host country, you may receive additional attention depending on your background, ethnicity and beliefs which may or may not be discrimination. People might judge you based on your ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. Remember, there is nowhere in the world that is 100% free of ignorant people. Whatever happens, don't let the possibility of discrimination prevent you from experiencing the life changing benefits of living abroad.

Explore this Diversity Guide to Study Abroad to learn more about how your identity may be impacted during your experience abroad.

Welcome to Ireland

Ireland is a country that is rich in culture and history. Located in Western Europe, Ireland occupies most of the island of Ireland in the northern Atlantic Ocean, west of the UK. The rest of the island is occupied by Northern Ireland, which is administratively linked to the UK. Apart from the glamorous landscapes, medieval castles and Christian monasteries, it is the livelihood and youthfulness of Ireland's locals which set the country apart from the rest. Metropolitan cities like Dublin and Cork bring out the spirit of the Irish youth, while the rural villages offer an old-fashioned charm and stunning landscapes. The Irish take pride in their country and love to share their enthusiasm with students.

Western Ireland is known for its mountains and natural beauty. Eastern Ireland is known for its castles and medieval villages and towns. Visitors should check out places like Newgrange and St. Canice's Cathedral.

Why Diversity?

For many, studying or working in a foreign country is a scary, challenging experience. Mixing that new experience with an oppressed identity can make for some potential worries.

We, at IES Abroad, want to give you all the resources available for you to have the best experience possible!

Dublin and Ireland are great, safe places to be you and be proud! Still, as in anywhere and with anyone, be safe and aware.

We hope that you will feel welcome in the "Land of a Hundred Thousand Welcomes."

You Are Not Alone

IES Abroad has developed a strong relationship with [City Therapy](https://www.citytherapy.ie/) to help our students overcome life's issues and problems – especially when abroad and away from their normal support systems:

<https://www.citytherapy.ie/>



MON-FRI 8am to 9pm
SAT-SUN 8am to 6pm



18 Dame Street Dublin 2
(Beside Kathmandu Kitchen)



01-906 5778
0863788002



EMAIL US
info@citytherapy.ie

Racial & Ethnic Minority Students Abroad

In the U.S. you might be classified by your ethnicity, but abroad, you may be identified first as an American. The people you meet will likely have an opinion about the U.S., and may be eager to tell you what they think, positive or negative.

Whether or not people identify you as an American, they may make assumptions based on your physical appearance. Many people you encounter abroad will show a sincere interest in your culture. There may be people who stare at you or who are eager to touch your hair or your skin. Others may ask insensitive questions about your cultural heritage, physical features, or national origins. **If you are abroad in an area where people have had little or no contact with minority students, people tend to be very curious, especially children.**

If somebody says or does something that is offensive to you, try to distinguish between a person who is genuinely curious about you and your culture and someone who has bad intentions. You may find yourself in some uncomfortable situations, and always remember to put your safety first. Below are just a few considerations for you to think about if you are a student who identifies as a racial or ethnic minority:

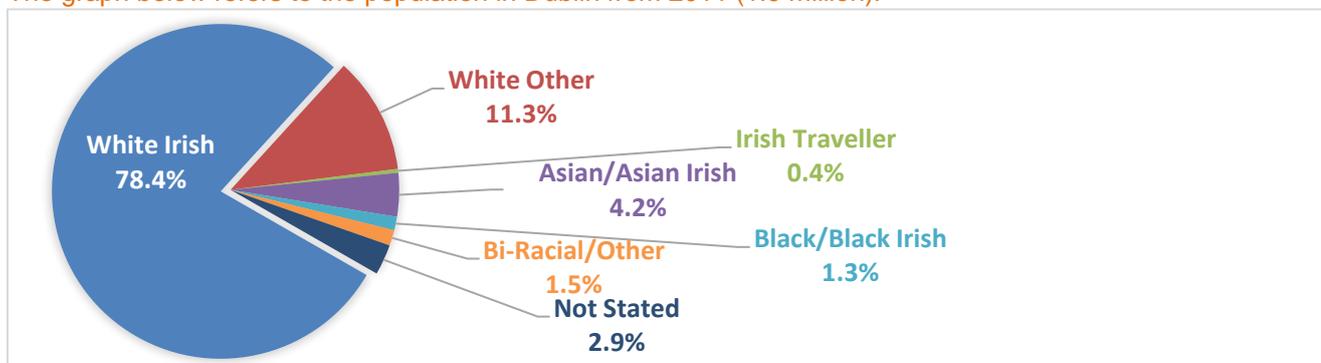
- How is my ethnic group perceived in my host country? What kind of stereotypes should I be aware of?
- How should I react if I find something to be offensive?
- Is the person curious or do they have bad intentions?
- Am I used to being part of the majority at home but will be a minority abroad? Or vice versa?
- Will there be other minority students in my program?
- Who will I contact if I do face racial or discriminatory incidents?
- Does my program have support staff that will understand and help me through any racial or discriminatory incident I may face?

Tips for Racial and Ethnic Minority Students Abroad:

- Remember that people abroad have distinct cultural norms and tend to be less “politically correct” than people in the U.S.
- The more you integrate with the culture the less you'll stand out, but your skin, hair, or other features may still attract attention.
- Be aware that people may generalize or incorrectly identify your ethnicity.
- Learn more about other minority students' experiences abroad. For example, you can talk to other minority students who have studied abroad or find information online.
- Build a support network among other study abroad students so that if you do face racial or discriminatory incidents you'll have support to deal with it. And, utilise your program staff to advice and support you.
- Be prepared if an incident does arise, but don't go abroad expecting racism or discrimination.

Dublin Demographics: Ethnic Groups

The graph below refers to the population in Dublin from 2011 (1.9 million).



Tips for African American and Latino Students in Ireland

The economic boom that started in the mid-1990s saw an increase of immigrants from Eastern Europe and Africa. People were generally welcomed and integrated into society without problems. After the economic downturn of 2008 however, race relations worsened as people blamed immigrants for taking jobs and resources from native Irish citizens. **Today, the economy is recovering and race relations are better, but problems still exist. American students of colour will likely be identified as such, but should still be aware of the racism and xenophobia experienced by people of colour from Africa and South America.**

Ethnic Group Resources

Organisations working to eradicate racism in Ireland:

- Anti-Racism Network (ARN) Ireland: <https://www.facebook.com/arnireland/>
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR) Ireland: <http://enarireland.org/>
- Show Racism the Red Card Ireland: <http://theredcard.ie/>
- Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI): <http://www.sari.ie/>
- United Against Racism (UAR) Ireland: <http://www.united-against-racism.net/>

For a list of organisations working to empower & represent ethnic minorities in Ireland, visit:

- New Communities Partnership (NCP): <http://www.newcommunities.ie/>

LGBTQ+ Students Abroad

If you are an LGBTQ+ student, it is important to understand that being out while you are abroad can affect your experiences. Some countries and cultures are open and accepting of LGBTQ+ people, and same sex marriage is legal in some countries. However, you may encounter stares or even hostility in other places where homosexuality is against the law.

Depending on where you go, openly displaying affection for your same-sex partner may put your physical safety at risk.

No matter where you go, you will encounter different ideologies and will have to adapt to different customs while you are abroad. Some students find it is necessary to hide their sexual orientation for safety reasons, while others feel free to express their sexual identity openly. In addition, discussing sexuality is taboo in some cultures, while in others it is acceptable.

Be informed and be aware of the attitudes, customs, and laws of your host country. Confide in people who you can trust, and establish a healthy relationship with others who can support you, help you feel safe, and make sure you have a rewarding experience abroad.

Tips for LGBTQ+ Students:

- Put your safety first.
- Research the terms and definitions used in your host country to talk about LGBTQ+ issues.
- Find a support network abroad, e.g. university societies or clubs, Meet Up groups, etc.

Ireland Demographics: Sexual Orientation

Between the stigma in coming out and identifying as LGBTQ+, and the invisibility of bisexual people in heterosexual relationships, it can be tough to pin down the exact number.



Tips for LGBTQ+ Students in Ireland

Ireland is a liberal and progressive country regarding LGBTQ rights. This may come as a surprise to many considering its devoutly Catholic heritage; but, despite their history, the Irish voted to legalize same sex marriage by popular vote 62% to 38% in 2015. **LGBTQ students will find the Irish to be generally welcoming with a robust and thriving LGBTQ+ community.**

LGBTQ+ Resources

Information services and support organisations for people of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies:

- BeLonG To: <http://www.belongto.org/>
- Outhouse: <http://www.outhouse.ie/>
- TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland): <http://www.teni.ie/>
- LGBT Ireland Helpline: <http://lgbt.ie/>
- List of LGBT Groups in Dublin: <http://www.dublinlesbianline.ie/groups.html>

For a list of LGBTQ+ friendly establishments in Dublin, check out:

- Rainbow Mile Dublin: <https://www.rainbowmile.ie/>
- <https://www.travelgayeurope.com/destination/gay-ireland/gay-dublin/>

Women Abroad

Being a woman abroad can be an eye-opening experience, because every culture has a different attitude towards women. During your trip, find out about your host country's cultural values and behaviours regarding women.

Across many countries, traditional gender roles often inform how women are expected to act, dress, and even speak to others. What might be perceived as common behaviour for women in the U.S. may be misinterpreted in other countries.

For example, how does religion play a role in how women are expected to dress? Can smiling or making direct eye contact with strangers imply something more than just a friendly gesture? If men stare and catcall while you walk down the street, how do you react?

Sometimes, what is considered "acceptable behaviour" for women in the U.S. has sexual connotations in other cultures, so it's important to talk with other women who have been to your host country to know what type of behaviour is most culturally appropriate.

You will also want to find out what the local attitudes are towards American women. There is a preconception abroad that American women are "easy" or "loose." If you are thinking about being sexually active abroad, inform yourself about STD prevention, birth control, and safe sex practices in that country.

You may become frustrated with local behaviours and attitudes towards women, especially if you feel it prevents you from being yourself. This is understandable when experiencing another culture. To avoid unwanted attention, dress and act like the local women. This can be a wonderful opportunity to befriend local women to learn directly from them about ways to dress or act as they do.

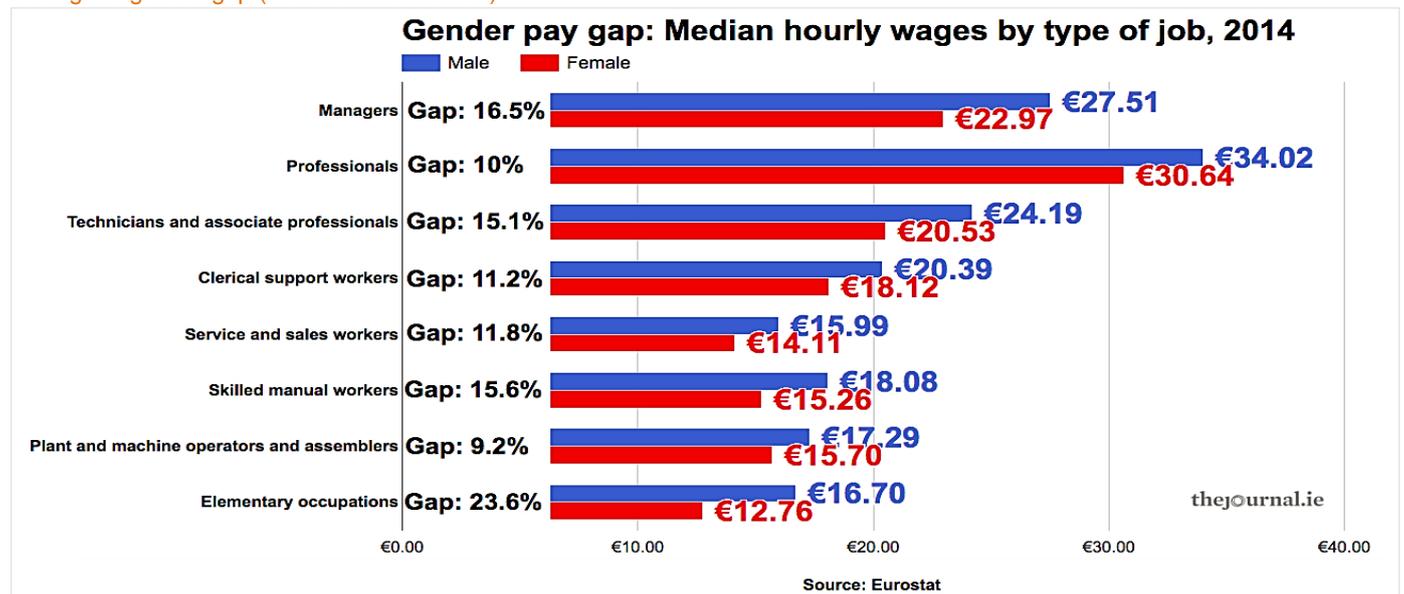
Throughout your trip, remember to put your safety first and always be aware of your surroundings. By observing the locals, you'll learn about gender roles in another culture.

Tips for Women:

- Put your safety first and be aware of your surroundings.
- Be mindful of and consider how the local women dress and act to maintain cultural sensitivity
- Be aware of cultural differences, including body language, that may be misinterpreted in your host culture.

Ireland Demographics: Gender Equality

On average, Irish women earn 14% less than Irish men, per hour; however, Ireland has ranked 5th out of 145 countries in terms of closing the gender gap (the U.S.A. ranks 28th).



Tips for Women in Ireland

Ireland still has some strides to make regarding women's rights. Although it is not as repressive as other countries, abortion remains a hotly contested issue due to the island's Catholic and conservative past. Despite this, women have access to education and high ranking and paying jobs, though a wage gap still exists. **Women visiting Ireland should have no significant issues with violence or any gender-based discrimination and should take normal precautions while traveling.**

Gender Equality Resources

Organisations committed to promoting gender equality in Ireland:

- Gender Equality in Ireland: <http://www.genderequality.ie/en/GE/Pages/Home>
- Irish Feminist Network (IFN): <http://www.irishfeministnetwork.org/>
- The National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI): <http://www.nwci.ie/>
- Women's Aid: <https://www.womensaid.ie/>

Students with Disabilities Abroad

Every country has a different attitude towards people with disabilities. For example, in the U.S., independence is highly valued, but in some other countries, people assume that those with disabilities want or need help.

Once you've been accepted into a program and if you are willing to disclose your disability, talk with your study abroad advisor or program director. Find out more about how people with disabilities are perceived in your host country. This will help you know what to expect in terms of discrimination as well as accessibility abroad.

Remember that your host country's attitudes towards people with disabilities may be drastically different from what you're used to in the U.S. You might see this in the way people treat you and in the kinds of resources available to you abroad.

Don't let these challenges dissuade you from studying abroad. By living in another country, you'll gain a new perspective on how other cultures treat people with disabilities. Your experiences abroad will help you grow and give you an appreciation of everything you have at home.

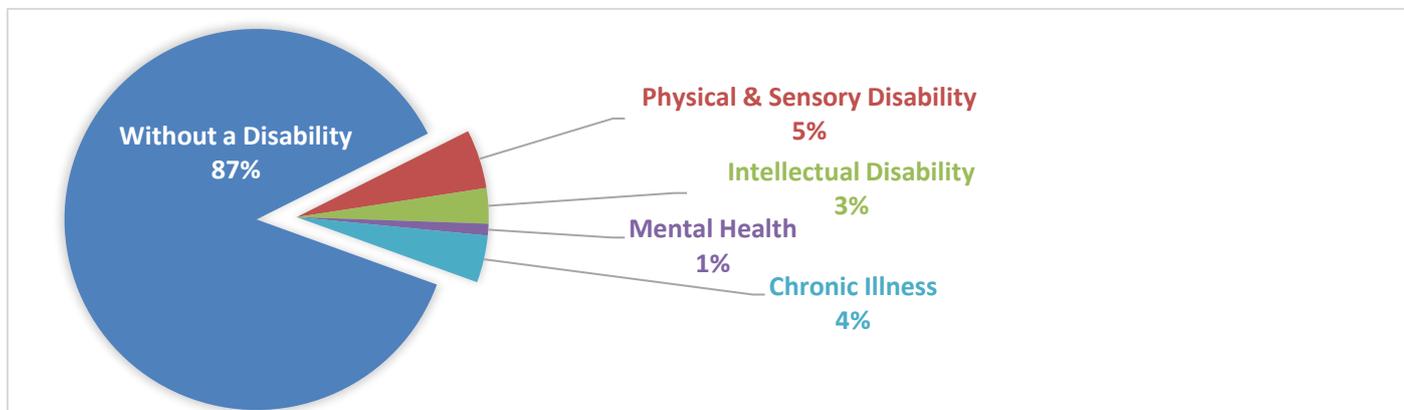
Must Ask Questions for Students with Disabilities:

- How are people with my disability viewed abroad?
- How should I respond if people give me unsolicited help?
- Am I willing to disclose my disability to others?
- How accessible are places in my host country?
- Will my disability prevent me from participating in certain excursions because of inaccessibility?

Tips for Students with Disabilities:

- Talk with other students with disabilities and learn about their experiences abroad.
- Let your program staff know about your disability, if you are comfortable doing so, so that as many accommodations as possible can be made.
- Keep in mind that places abroad may not be as accessible as you are used to.
- Remember that people with disabilities may be treated differently than you are accustomed to.
- Be flexible and think creatively about how you can accommodate your disability abroad.

Dublin Demographics: (Dis)Ability



Tips for Students with Disabilities

Ireland is a modern country that has significant infrastructure in place for students with physical disabilities. Even at the vast majority of historic attractions, student will find ramps and entrances specifically for use by the mobility disabled. **Students with disabilities should only take standard precautions such as planning ahead to make sure routes and venues have the necessary accessibility as not all public transit stops are accessible.**

Disability Resources

Information services and support organisations for people with disabilities all over Ireland:

- Health Executive Services (HSE) Disability Services: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/>
- Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI): <http://www.disability-federation.ie/>
- Enable Ireland: <http://www.enableireland.ie/>
- National Disability Authority (NDA): <http://nda.ie/>

Resource for students going abroad with a disability:

- Abroad with Disabilities (AWD): <http://abroadwithdisabilities.org/>

Religious Diversity Abroad

Religion plays a role in many cultures around the world. Whether you practice a religion or not, going abroad exposes you to different belief systems, which gives you an opportunity to learn more about your host country's culture. Do your best to understand the majority religion being practiced in your host country, especially if it is one you are largely unfamiliar with.

Maybe you're used to being part of the religious majority at home, but will be part of the religious minority abroad. If you are planning to practice your religion abroad, ask locals or your program staff to see if there are any places where you can worship safely and comfortably. Even if you don't practice a religion yourself, many on your program may. It can be helpful to find ways to support your peers, and to understand how to be an ally for them while you're abroad. You'll also want to find out what degree of religious tolerance there is in your host country.

By going abroad, you'll gain a new perspective on religions as they are practiced around the world. You'll return home with an increased familiarity with other belief systems and a greater respect for them.

Must Ask Questions about Religion:

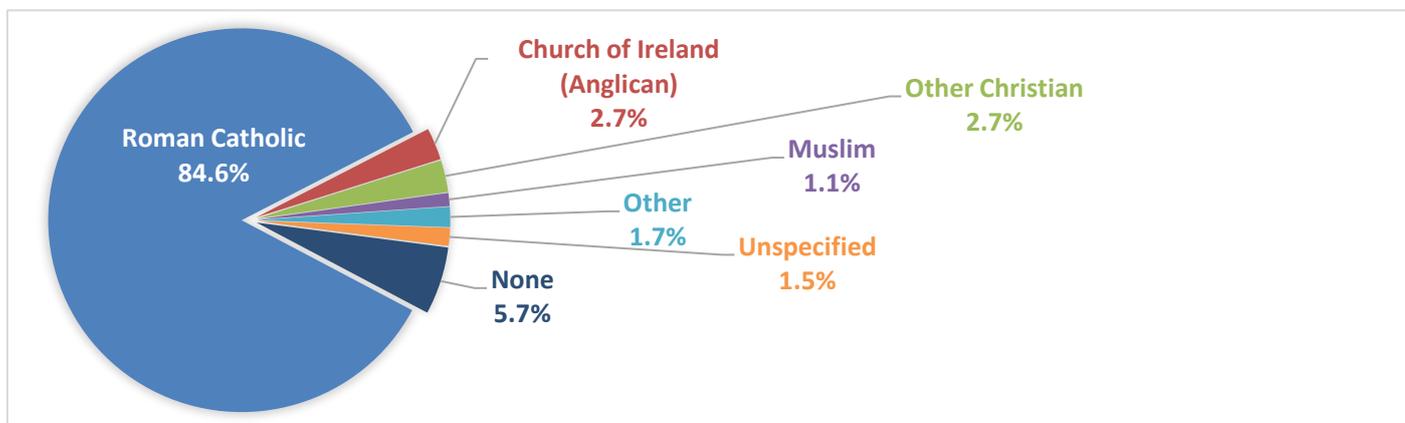
- Will I be part of the religious majority or minority abroad?
- Are there any laws regarding religion? Is there a separation between religion and government?
- How tolerant is the host country of other religions? What about atheists and agnostics?
- Is it culturally sensitive for me to wear religious symbols or clothing?
- What are ways I can respect the religion in my host country and participate in cultural events, even if I don't practice that religion?

Tips about Religion:

- Stay open minded about religious practices, even if you receive criticism for your beliefs.
- If you are planning to practice your religion abroad, you may want to find out what places of worship there are.
- If you have religious dietary restrictions, be sure to let your program staff know ahead of time.
- Depending on where you go, religion may have a larger or smaller role than it does in the U.S.
- Use your experience abroad to learn about world religions the role they play in diverse cultures.

Ireland Demographics: Religion

The graph below depicts religious demographics for the whole of Ireland -- there is a growing variety of religious communities in Ireland. However, please note that Dublin has the lowest proportion of Catholics & has the highest proportion of people with no religion (11%).



Tips for Religious Students

Religious Irish are overwhelmingly Catholic. **The Irish are also accepting of Protestant denominations and other religions. Although Jewish and Muslim students may not find large communities of fellow believers, you will likely not experience significant problems. Islamophobia however, is on the rise, so students should be aware of their surroundings.**

Religion Resources

Other Christian denominations (besides Catholicism):

- Anglican: www.ireland.anglican.org
- Presbyterian: www.presbyterianireland.org
- Methodist: www.irishmethodist.org
- Pentecostal and Orthodox Churches: The Irish Council of Churches has a Directory of Migrant Led Churches: www.irishchurches.org

Other religious communities in Ireland include:

- Buddhism: www.dublinbuddhistcentre.org, www.meditateinireland.com, www.buddhism.ie
- Hinduism: www.hindu.ie, www.ivt.ie
- Judaism: www.jewishireland.org
- Sikhism: <http://www.gurunakdarbar.ie/>
- Lutheran: www.lutheran-ireland.org
- Bahá'í Faith: www.bahai.ie
- Islam: www.islamireland.ie, www.islaminireland.com