



STUDENT VETERANS & STUDYING ABROAD



At AIFS, we want to support all students in their study abroad journey, regardless of their gender, race, religion, age, physical ability, or sexual orientation. Everyone has a complex identity, and your service in the military can be an important factor when deciding on a study abroad location. We encourage you to use the information here as you review your options in order to select the location that will be the best fit for you.

Use the questions on the other side of this handout and the Student Resources section of the AIFS website to help you **research locations** that best fit your needs and interests.

Remember that **everyone's experience is unique**. Although there are some locations that are more welcoming, **student veterans can and do study abroad all over the world**.

Work closely with your campus Education Abroad Office and Veterans Services Offices to determine which program options will work best for **utilizing your GI benefits**.

AIFS offers **scholarships for students from underrepresented communities** in study abroad (including student veterans). For students eligible to receive GI Bill education benefits, AIFS will provide a \$500 grant for semester programs and \$250 for summer or January-term programs. Students can also utilize funds from outside sources.

You can **connect with program alumni** through the AIFS student portal or by emailing alumni@aifs.com and letting us know your locations of interest and if you would like to speak with a student who has served in the military.

Additional information and resources can be found on our website at <https://www.aifsabroad.com/student-resources.asp>.

Please contact us at studyabroad@aifs.com or at (800) 727-2437 so we can discuss your specific interests and needs for your time abroad. We look forward to hearing from you.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER & TIPS

Will you need to list your military service on a visa application, and will there be a visa issue if you have served in certain countries?

Does your host country have a military? How are people who serve in the military treated in your host country and how does this compare to your experience at home?

Do you need to maintain a fitness regimen, and what facilities will be available?

How will you discuss your military experience with locals, and how might it be perceived?

Do you currently work with a mental healthcare professional and will you be able to continue doing so while you are abroad?

How will the academic and cultural context abroad shape this international experience compared to your time abroad in the military?

Are there stereotypes in your host country about the different aspects of your identity?

If you find something to be offensive, how should you react in your host country versus at home?

What other intersections of your identity may take the foreground if your veteran status is not in the majority (citizenship, first language, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.)?

AIFS staff in-country are there to support you, so don't be afraid to ask for help. They can provide insight into local cultural norms, connect you with resources in your host community and assist you if you experience challenges.

Be aware that there are different cultural norms abroad and that people you encounter may be less "politically correct" than you may expect.

Research the military history of your host location to familiarize yourself with the region's background related to U.S. military involvement. Understanding how this has changed over time may help you to contextualize some of the complex cultural dynamics you could encounter.

Worried about a current or future security clearance? Create a spreadsheet to store sustained foreign contact information for serious connections you make abroad. Keep track of your addresses abroad and details for two references per address. You can check out the SF-86 form for more info.

Utilize your network of friends, both abroad and at home, and your host family, if applicable.

Don't go abroad expecting discrimination, but be prepared if an incident does arise.