Global Access: A renewed partnership to expand equitable access abroad

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12:00-1:00 PM
Outline

- Introductions
- DRC/LAC Collaboration
- Accommodation Request Form 2.0
- Professional’s Guide
- Next Steps
- Q&A/Wrap Up
Introductions

● Rachel Anderson - Disability Resource Center
  ○ Access Consultant
  ○ General caseload of undergrad/grad students
  ○ Liaison to LAC

● Molly Giffin - Disability Resource Center
  ○ Senior Access Consultant
  ○ General caseload of undergrad/grad students and Law School students
  ○ Liaison to LAC

● Peggy Retka - Learning Abroad Center
  ○ Program Director for France & Senegal
  ○ General student advisor
  ○ Office liaison to the DRC
Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the importance of considering accessibility, confidentiality, and the interactive process to facilitate access for students learning abroad.

2. Be able to incorporate new strategies when working collaboratively with campus partners to create or update forms and processes; including internal consultation, strategic collaboration with campus partners, and feedback from other entities.

3. Learn how to apply the template Accommodations Request Form and Professional’s Guide and be able to adapt these tools to home institutions.
Who’s In The Room?

- Do you currently support students studying abroad with accommodations?
- What size institution are you from?
- Is there a centralized learning abroad office at your school?
Who are the DRC and LAC?

University of Minnesota:
- 65,000 students
- Research 1 institution
- Large urban campus
- Undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs; including a Law, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Medical School

DRC:
- Serves over 4,500 students, 2,000 employees and guests of the University
- 65 total employees, 15 of which are Access Consultants
- In-house testing center, document conversion, ASL interpreting, captioning, and access assistants (student workers who provide 1:1 access support)

LAC:
- Central study abroad office
- 2,669 students abroad in 2018-2019
- 37 staff including 18 Programmers/Advisors
- 200 programs in over 60 countries
- Programs vary in length, level, academic focus, teaching format, language requirements, cost, and degree of independence demanded of the participant.
History of DRC and LAC Collaboration

- Late ‘90s: grant-funded project called **Access Abroad**.
- Project goal: increase access to international programs for students with disabilities.
- Outcomes:
  - Accommodation Request Form
  - Online Module and other resources
  - A list of global programs that had a proven history of accommodating students
  - A dedicated student checklist
  - Resources for professionals and program leaders
  - Increased collaboration between LAC, DRC, and on-site staff
- This information was revolutionary for its time!
- In 2019, the time had come to update the process yet again.
Creation of Access Abroad Form version 2.0

- Motivations for updating:
  - Refresh outdated language
    - Diagnostic information no longer listed
  - Reduce number of pages
  - Close feedback loop between Access Consultants, Learning Abroad Center staff, and on-site staff
  - Update format to be more representative of interactive process
  - Improve technical accessibility of form and create it in a digital format
Student Accommodation Request Form

NOTE: This form should be completed with an Access Consultant in the Disability Resource Center (DRC) of the University of Minnesota (UoM) or the appropriate person at your home institution. Please download the form, complete it using Adobe Acrobat Reader, sign and return the saved form via email to Peggy Rattka, Program Director, Learning Abroad Center (LAC).

Submit the completed form at least 8 weeks prior to the study abroad program start date to allow sufficient time to determine accommodation possibilities.

Accommodations Requested

Classroom

Coursework

Testing

Housing & Dining

Program Excursions & Travel

Access Services

Additional Comments & Considerations

Student Information

Name

UoM ID

Email

Phone

Home Institution (if different than the UoM)

Study Abroad Program Information

Study Abroad Program

Term

Year

Program Contact Name

Email

Phone

Disability Resource Center Contact Information

Name

Email

Phone

Instructions

The DRC Access Consultant will state the accommodation(s), rationale, and what this accommodation looks like on the home campus. The DRC will use the accompanying Professional’s Guide when filling out this form.

NOTE: Accommodations abroad may be implemented differently than accommodations at the University of Minnesota or home institution. For example, time extensions for testing may be limited to just 1.5 times or video recording lectures may not be possible. Early completion of this form with the DRC will facilitate collaboration with the LAC and the on-site staff to better determine how accommodations can be implemented abroad.
Certification By Disability Resource Center Access Consultant And Student

I certify that the accommodations requested on this form are reasonable accommodations which would generally be provided to this student in a US institution.

DRC Staff Signature:

Date:

I recognize that some of these accommodations may not be available at the study abroad site but that effort will be made to provide alternative accommodations whenever possible. I also recognize that requesting accommodations less than 8 weeks in advance may not allow enough time for accommodations to be adequately implemented. I give permission for my study abroad program contact to communicate with overseas staff regarding my accommodation requests. They will be in conversation with me and my DRC Access Consultant about possible accommodations. This form will be kept in confidence and shared between your DRC Access Consultant, IAC Program Contacts and necessary on-site staff to assess and provide accommodations.

Student Signature:

Date:

Accommodation Response Form (to be completed by on-site staff)

List the primary person on-site whom the student should contact to review accommodation requests and possibilities.

Name:

Title/Role:

Email:

Phone:

List individuals who have been informed of this student’s accommodations requests. Include the individual’s name, title/role and their relationship to the student.

Additional Comments & Considerations
Professionals’ Guide

- The **Professionals’ Guide to the Accommodation Request Form** was created to help with the transition from menu-style to fill-in-the-blank form.
- Uses a uniform process for addressing each student’s unique accommodations needs.
- Emphasizes specificity due to:
  - Limited interactive process with faculty/staff abroad
  - Differing understandings/laws around disability
  - Considerations outside of typical on-campus accommodations
- Provides many examples
- Designed for:
  - Access Consultants to fill out (UMN and elsewhere)
  - LAC Staff to understand (UMN and elsewhere)
  - On-site Staff for context
Examples in the Professional’s Guide

TESTING

● DRC Example: Student uses double the time on exams due to barriers demonstrating knowledge under time constraints. Allow student to take extended time on the exam according to the possibilities of the local laws (up to twice the normal allotted time period).

● On-site Response: This request has been shared with the on-site instructor(s). Legally, we can only extend the time allotted by 1.5 on exams.
Current State of Studying Abroad

- March 2020 we brought 1,075 students home from study abroad.
- Since then we have sent 28 (Spring 2021) and 110 (Summer 2021) students abroad.
- Cautiously optimistic that 2021-2022 will be a move towards typical participation rates.
- Innovative Programming
  - Virtual International Internships
- Huge impact on study abroad at the UofM and the field of international education
  - Layoffs abroad and in the US
  - Fewer program options for Fall 2021 and beyond
  - Pent up student demand
- Rebuilding with new insights
Connecting with students: LAC Avatars

Alex and friends discuss accessibility abroad
Next Steps: Increased Visibility, Site Specific

- Continued cross training
- Targeted marketing
- Site specific information
- Intersectionality of student identities
Small Group Discussion

- What are some ways in which accommodations are miscommunicated when students are studying abroad?

- Can you share some success stories you have experienced?
What is a manageable next step your office could take to support students abroad?
Contact Us:

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