

Community Discussion Series

Queering Study Abroad: Diversifying
Rainbow Community Support
On-Site



Education Abroad: Advising &
Student Support

 #DiversityAbroad

Sponsored By

Diversity Abroad's Inclusive Advising for Education Abroad Professionals eLearning Course



INCLUSIVE ADVISING FOR EDUCATION
ABROAD PROFESSIONALS

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Session Overview



- ❑ Disclaimers
- ❑ Setting the Scene- What do we mean by 'Queering'?
- ❑ Case Study: Group Dynamics
- ❑ Case Study: Interactions with the Host Culture Community
- ❑ Case Study: Curriculum
- ❑ Discussion
- ❑ Resources
- ❑ Q&A, Closing

Disclaimers

**We are in a Brave Space:
We accept varying opinions with
respect, acknowledge everyone's
basic personhood and different
levels of comfort, and allow
ourselves to step in and out of
challenging conversations.**

**Today's conversation will
not be all encompassing.**

**Our language and our
perspectives will be biased.**

**We hope to crowdsource the
knowledge of those connected
to the conversation!**

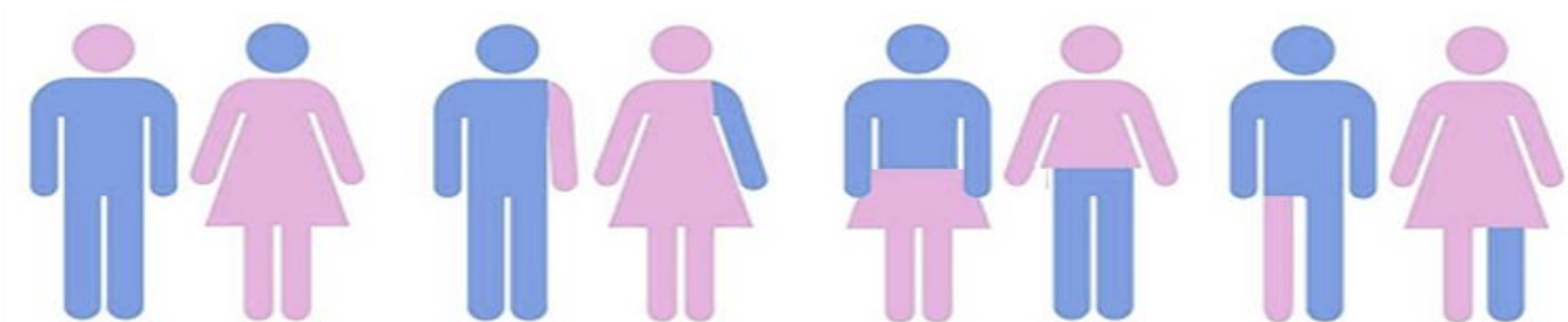
Queering Study Abroad- What do we mean?



Queer – Queer is often used as an umbrella term referring to anyone who is not straight and not cisgender. Cisgender people are people whose gender identity and expression matches the sex they were assigned at birth. Historically the term queer was used as a slur against LGBTQIA people, but in recent years it has been reclaimed by LGBTQIA communities. However, some LGBTQIA people still find the term offensive. Queer is also often used as a broad rejection of labels. In this context, this could be a rejection of any type of label, but most often refers to a rejection of labels for gender and sexual orientation. (retrieved from [Outright Action International](#))

Key takeaways- queering global education

- For many the word queer is a way to **create more space for those who have been othered** by heteronormative social norms, by outdated notions of gender roles, or even by the LGBTQ+ rights movement.
- There is no one recipe for queering because we want to **honor individual experiences**.
- There are a multitude of individual experiences, as well as a **multitude of cultural perceptions, worldviews and expressions regarding gender and sexuality**.
- Queering study abroad and global education programs is a **holistic and intersectional approach** to program design and delivery.
- Queerness is a space where everyone's identities are **celebrated** and each individual feels a **sustained and authentic sense of belonging**.



Case Studies

After each scenario, you are invited to give reactions, comments, questions, and possible next steps in the chat

Proactive Tips: Planning on front-end of program to ensure inclusivity is embedded

Reactive Tips: When a similar situation occurs, step-by-step process for successful outcome

Case Study #1: Group Dynamics



Ren is on a 4-week long summer program **led by faculty** from their university to **Buenos Aires, Argentina**. Ren is **genderqueer but assigned female** at birth, and is comfortable staying with a female roommate, Kiley, in double-room residencia accommodations. As a joke, **Kiley tells Ren not to “hit” on her**, especially not when they are alone together. Ren brushes it off. However, **Kiley continues to joke** with the rest of their friend group when they see attractive women out in excursions by asking loudly if Ren wants her to be a “wingwoman”. Some **male friends also comment** how “hot” it would be if that happened when they go out at bars in the evening. **Ren comes to one of the faculty** leaders and complains about the harassment, but it **is dismissed** as just jokes, since none of the other students “were actually attracted” to Ren. After this, the faculty and on-ground partner **notices Ren on their own** almost all the time, and there appears to have been an argument between the roommates. **What would you as the on-site coordinator for this program do if you noticed this?**

Case Study #1 Cont.

Proactive:

- Have inclusive group **dynamic-building exercises** in orientation
- Talk about **behavioral** norms like dating and sex to **normalize the respect** for the subject
- Send around a **housing survey** before, that includes identity-specific questions
- Work together to have **regular check ins** as group, and one on one with students
- Deliver **cultural information** available on LGBTQ+ climate in case there are **welcoming communities** or neighborhoods that students can “see themselves” reflected in



Case Study #1 Cont.

Reactive:

- Get **information from faculty** on if they had noticed anything or talked to Ren
- **Work with faculty** leads to do group check-ins and one-on-ones
- Follow **procedure for reporting** harassment with organization, and to university if student tells you
- Explore ways with Ren to **find community and connect with others** who may be more supportive of their identity, and encourage them to check in with **support networks** back home- identify who those are



Case study #2: Local cultural dynamics



Gray is on a 4-month gap year program in **China**, and is in the **final week of a 2-month urban homestay**. Gray is a **cisgender male student and identifies himself as queer and/or gay**. All of the students and on-site staff on Gray's program know about and affirm Gray's sexuality (and many in the group, including staff, celebrate Gray's sexuality). There are also two other students in the 12-person group that identify with their group mates and staff as queer. Additionally **the group has discussed the history and socio-cultural implications of gender and sexuality in China**, and recently met with a local LGBTQIA+ rights advocate. **Gray decides to come-out to one of his homestay siblings, without consulting on-site staff or any of the members of his group**. After Gray comes out to his homestay sibling, he approaches on-site staff to debrief. **Everything went smoothly**, and Gray is pleased with his decision to have come out, and tells staff that **he would like to come out to the rest of the family before leaving the homestay**.

As on-site staff, what would your next steps be?

How might this scenario be different if this student were not cisgender and male identifying?

Case study #2 Cont.

Proactive:

- Provide a **pre-departure session about queerness** abroad.
- Introduce students to **LGBTQIA+ activists and local groups**.
- Host a pre-departure, (virtual) on program, or re-entry panel of **previous LGBTQIA+ students** who have been abroad.
- Provide an **information session about the history of the LGBTQIA+ movement** in-country, and if possible an LGBTQIA+ city tour.
- Offer a **workshop to homestay families, internship partners, and other people in the local community on LGBTQIA+ issues** in Western societies—with the aim of understanding the students they are receiving in their communities or homes a little better



Case study #2 Cont.

Reactive:

In this particular case-study on-site staff would ideally **continue to affirm and support** Gray. A negative reactive step might involve telling Gray not to come-out to the rest of his homestay family. A positive reactive step might involve some guided questions for Gray such as:

- What are **your motivations for wanting to come-out** to the rest of your homestay family? How do you think they will react?
- Do you have **a plan if things do not go as you hope?**
- What kinds of things do you **still hope to learn** about gender and sexuality in China?



Case study #3: Curriculum

One of your faculty directors, who has led an introductory language program to Spain each Maymester at your university for many years, shares with you that they couldn't make their program more "gay friendly" because **there simply aren't any LGBTQIA+ people in the small town where the program is based.** They further share that their program's curriculum is about learning the language quickly and that, for a variety of reasons, **there is no possibility of "queering the curriculum;"** i.e., the students' language abilities aren't strong enough, the program is only 4 weeks in duration, and the Spanish Department at your university has strict requirements for what must be covered in lower-level courses.

As the faculty-led programs coordinator at your institution, how do you respond?



Case study #3 Cont.

Proactive

- Cultivating strategic, **mutually-beneficial relationships** with key campus partners: LGBTQIA+ resource center; faculty in Gender and Sexuality Studies; various curriculum or faculty affairs committees on campus; etc.
- Creating study abroad program director training on inclusive curriculum development.
- Establishing specific criteria for program renewals and proposals that **require faculty leaders to consider the representation and inclusion of diverse communities** - at home and abroad- in all aspects of their programs (academic and co-curricular).
- Providing **additional funding** for the faculty director to further develop their program with the goal of connecting students with more diverse course content and local communities in Spain.



Case study #3 Cont.

Reactive



- Encouraging the faculty member to attend a LGBTQIA+ Ally Training on campus offered throughout the semester
- Providing the faculty directors' accepted program participants with resources related to the city/region's LGBTQIA+ community and resources
- Having a developmental or **“calling in” discussion** regarding the perceived lack of LGBTQIA+ people in the program's small town location.
- Connecting the faculty director with other colleagues that could “peer mentor” on this topic
- Taking your concerns regarding the faculty members' comments immediately to their department chair or dean.

Questions & Discussion

1

If proactive and reactive is a spectrum, where does your institution/organization fall on that spectrum? What steps are you taking to be more proactive in your LGBTQ+ support on site?

2

If you are not currently running programs, what can you be doing now to make your programs more LGBTQ+ inclusive when they resume? How can you ensure your virtual programs are LGBTQ+ inclusive?

3

In your role, what actions can you take to make your programs more LGBTQ+ inclusive?

Resources

Diversity Abroad:

- [Diversity & Inclusion Advising Manuals](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Students Abroad](#)
- [A Roadmap for the Queer Study Abroad Experience](#)
- [Sexual Health Through and LGBTQ+ Lens](#)

Resource List: Curated by Task Force Member,
Rachel Mantiñán

- Beginner's guides in English/Spanish
- Glossaries in English/Spanish
- Courses for training
- General resources for supporting LGBTQ+ students and queering the curriculum
- Location-Specific Resources

Resources

[Inclusive Advising for Education Abroad Professionals eLearning Course](#) - Diversity Abroad



- A foundational understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion in global education;
- An understanding of how inclusive best practices in advising can be integrated throughout the spectrum of the education abroad process from outreach, marketing, & recruitment, pre-departure, in-country, and upon return.
- An increased awareness of biases that may influence interactions with different student populations.

Future Course Dates

- April 12 - May 10 | [Register Now](#) (deadline April 9)
- May 24 - June 21 | [Register Now](#) (deadline May 21)

What's Next?



- Full Recording of Community Discussion
 - Added to D&I Resource Center for Members
- PowerPoint Presentation & Resource Sheet
 - Sent to All Participants
- Upcoming Community Discussion:
 - May 5 - [Mental Health: Navigating the Uncomfortable in the Workplace](#) @ 2 PM EST



Diversity Abroad **ONLINE COMMUNITY FORUMS**

Let's continue the conversation!

COMMUNITY FORUM TOPICS:

- **Strategy and Communications** (ex. Student Data and Profile, Strategy and Leadership, Communication and Partnerships)
- **Operations** (ex. Organizational Operations, Professional Development and Staffing, Assessment and Evaluation)
- **Academics and Student Success** (ex. Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities, Advising and Student Support)
- **Health, Safety, and Security**
- **General** (Open Discussion)

Diversity Abroad members are invited to post questions and share promising practices today!

DiversityNetwork.org/CommunityForums

Contact Us



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