

Returnee Discussion Guide

CULTURE

- Cultural differences
 - Dress, body movement
 - Communication, both verbal and nonverbal
 - Language
 - Time; schedule; the pace of a day
 - Gender; race; class; and sexual orientation
 - Food
 - Music
- Meeting host country nationals/dating – what is the best way?
- Cultural dos and don'ts
- Assimilation into student-life
- Culture shock

ACADEMICS

- Differences in the education system from that of the U.S.
- Grading and assessment
- Courses, professors, papers, examinations
- Library use
- Computer, printer and e-mail access
- Field trips, labs, internships/volunteering
- Credits and taking a course on a credit/ no credit basis

SOCIAL & IDENTITY

- Will there be other minority students in my program or host country population?
- How is my ethnic group perceived? Stereotypes?
- How should I react if I find something to be offensive? Who can I contact for support?
- Is the person curious or do they have bad intentions?
- Has my host family housed minority students before? If not, will this be an issue for them?
- Am I used to being part of the majority at home but will be a minority abroad? Or vice versa?
- What are the laws regarding homosexuality and gender identity in my host country?
- Is it safe for me to be out? To my program staff? Host family?
- Am I unsafe or uncomfortable?
- What is the LGBTQ+ population like in my host country? How visible and large is it? How do they dress, behave, etc.?

HEALTH, SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND SAFETY

- Program director and program staff
- Group Dynamics
- Legal and political dos and don'ts
- Personal Safety; cultural perceptions of Americans by the host country
- Medical Care: doctors, medical facilities, over-the-counter medicines, prescriptions, vaccinations, health insurance
- Visa-requirements, working with embassies/ consulates, fees, deadlines

DAILY LIFE

- Housing; during orientation and throughout program
- Meals, local transportation and commuting
- Money and banking & budgeting – how much do things cost?

- Budgeting - how much do things cost?
- Telephone and mail
- Local Transportation and commuting
- Laundry