Before you can effectively search for a program, you need to know more about yourself. Take the time to reflect on your own level of preparedness for going abroad. Assess your individual needs, skills, experience and tolerance for change and use this information to inform your choice of program.

Self-Reflection

1) Have you traveled domestically or internationally? If so, where? Reflect on past experiences. Think about how easy or difficult it was for you to adjust to new surroundings. Do you enjoy returning to familiar places? Do you like the challenge of exploring the unknown in unfamiliar destinations? Do you like someone else to plan your activities or do you want the flexibility to make your own plans?

2) Which part of the world are you interested in and why? Have you enrolled in relevant courses on the UM campus to further your knowledge? Do you actively engage someone who’s lived or studied in your preferred host country?

3) Do you have skills in another language sufficient to take university-level courses in that language? Aural comprehension, verbal, reading and writing skills are required. Testing out with an AP exam is usually not sufficient preparation.

4) Is there a region, country, city, museum, festival, tradition or language that intrigues you and makes you want to experience it for an extended period of time?

5) When do you want to gain international experience? How long do you want to be gone? Identify the year and term.

6) Do you need the credits to graduate? If so, what kind of credit do you need to earn while abroad—studio or academic?

7) Are there specific courses that you need to take while abroad? Discuss your 4-year study plan with your academic advisor(s) and determine how study abroad integrates with the rest of your academic plans.

8) Do you want to study abroad for credit? Volunteer abroad? Conduct independent research abroad? The international experience requirement can be met through a range of experiences, provided they are pre-approved and submitted by the deadline.

9) Do you have ongoing physical or mental health needs or require special accommodations on the UM campus? If so, research the availability of services in other countries and determine whether your needs can be met.

10) What are your other interests and goals?

a) If you are enrolled in a dual-degree program or pursuing a minor, could the international experience help you fulfill requirements for that program?

b) Do you want to combine study abroad with an internship?

c) Do you want to learn more about a field you may pursue in graduate school such as art therapy, public health or micro-enterprise?
Financing education abroad

**a)** Do you need money to apply for your passport? Stamps students are eligible to apply for passport scholarships. Look for info on M-Compass.

**b)** Do you understand how your financial aid package may or may not transfer to various kinds of study abroad programs? Review the study abroad section of the UM Office of Financial Aid. Understand your own aid package.

**c)** If you are eligible for Pell Grants, you are automatically eligible to apply for federally-funded education abroad scholarships called Benjamin A. Gilman scholarships.

**d)** If you have MET, do you know its limited applicability for study abroad programs?

**e)** If you receive private scholarships, do you know their applicability to various kinds of study abroad programs?

**f)** Have you considered that scholarship deadlines may be months prior to application deadlines for study abroad programs?

**g)** How will being abroad impact your housing commitments in Ann Arbor?

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What level of cultural immersion are you looking for?

**a)** Do you feel comfortable studying in countries where there are relatively few US citizens or do you want to have easy access to other Americans?

**b)** Do you want to live with UM students, other US students, a host family, students from your host country?

**c)** Do you want to take courses with UM students, other US students or students from your host country?

**d)** Have you thought about studying in a location where your ethnic background would be in the minority population? Or majority?

**e)** What is your heritage? Do you want to explore your cultural or ethnic heritage on a deeper level or explore a new place with unfamiliar traditions?

**f)** If you were raised in an urban or suburban area, have you thought about studying in a rural area? Or vice versa?