

Anxiety

Anxiety is characterized by excessive worrying and sometimes physical symptoms (e.g., heart racing, gastrointestinal issues, sweating). To get a sense of whether a student is worried too much or overly ruminative, try asking the following questions:

General anxiety

Questions	Student Responses
What sorts of things worry you about moving away from home? (Is the student's response in proportion to the situation?)	

Social anxiety

Overall, responses that reflect a great deal of distress in social situations that are due to fear, embarrassment, or humiliation would indicate potential social anxiety.

Questions	Student Responses
Do you like meeting new people*? *If no: Do you tend to avoid social situations or suffer through them?	
How does being in groups of people or meeting new people make you feel?	

Panic disorder

Look for responses that reflect a sudden onset of panic and are associated with physical symptoms such as heart racing, feeling faint, or loss of control.

Questions	Student Responses
Have you ever had an experience when you felt really scared or worried out of the blue*? *If yes: What happened?	

Obsessive compulsive disorder

Overall, look for the presence of thoughts that are very disturbing to the student and cause them a lot of stress or anxiety because they won't go away, or behaviours they can't stop themselves from repeating again and again to relieve their anxiety.

Questions	Student Responses
Sometimes it is hard to turn our thoughts off. Do you ever feel like you have thoughts that won't go away even though you try to stop thinking about them?	
What about things you feel you have to do over and over again like checking the locks or washing your hands?	

Students who have coping strategies that help alleviate their anxiety will be better able to function in academic and social situations than those who don't, so it is a good idea to inquire about this as well.

A mental health issue in and of itself does not mean a student can't have a successful study abroad experience. However, it is prudent to recognize the symptoms that would make the transition too difficult, and essentially end up harming the student's chances of success in the long run.