

Helping Students Appreciate the Personal & Professional Development Benefits of International Opportunities

Sponsored by ACPA's COMMISSION FOR GLOBAL
DIMENSIONS OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND
COMMISSION FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT



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ASK QUESTIONS, GAIN INSIGHT, AND SHARE IDEAS ON:

- Understanding and appreciating international experiences
- Articulating the benefits and learning outcomes of study abroad and other international experiences
- Understanding why and how staff should encourage students to explore international experiences
- Marketing international experience to campus constituents (e.g., for use in employer relations or in fundraising/development efforts)



COMPETENCIES NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

- Cultural competence
- Learning integration
- Knowledge of human cultures
- Intellectual and practical skills
- Personal/social responsibility
- Knowledge of global issues, developments, and implications
- Identification of national/international cultural values/traditions
- Foreign language skills
- Knowledge of global markets



OUTCOMES GAINED FROM STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES

- Intercultural competence
- Identity development
- Language and communication skills
- Career goals
- Interpersonal skills
- Professional skills/content knowledge
- Intellectual development

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TUROS DISSERTATION FINDINGS

Employment Recruiters' Differentiation of Candidate Characteristics: Does Study Abroad Make a Difference?

1. Study abroad's value seemed contingent upon a number of characteristics and variations
 - Internships made an impact
 - Study abroad was a factor
 - Implications for study abroad length and location
2. The importance of study abroad related to recruiter characteristics



FACTORS IMPACTING RECRUITERS' EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES

- Breadth of experience
- Internships
- Study abroad
 - Skills
 - Location
 - Length
 - Access



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ENCOURAGING THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

International experiences provide opportunities for students to navigate challenges inherent in the larger social environment.

These experiences “provide a variety of challenges which students must negotiate from public transportation systems, markets, menus, and pharmacies to higher order things like language, customs, cultural norms.”

Therefore, international experiences are by definition experiential learning opportunities, yet students return from the experience saying they have “learned something” but are unable to “articulate the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained, let alone demonstrate how they are transferable to other settings.”

Gardner, P., Gross, L., & Steglitz, I. (2008). Unpacking Your Study Abroad Experience: Critical Reflection for Workplace Competencies. *Collegiate Employment Research Institute Research Brief*, 1(1), 1-10.



PREPARATION BEFORE DEPARTURE

- In a student workshop setting, facilitate a 15-20 minute session on perceived skills and competencies sought by employers or other constituents such as graduate admission committees
- Have student(s) who has/have embarked on international experiences share experiences and reflect on the learning
- Students then individually or in groups identify:
 - Personal goals
 - Professional or career oriented goals
 - Skills, abilities, or competencies hoped to be developed or refined while abroad



PREPARATION BEFORE DEPARTURE

- Students identify anticipated outcomes and work with an advisor, classmates, or faculty to hone these thoughts
- Immediately prior to departure, ask students to return to their anticipated outcomes
 - Encourage students to take time to reconsider these anticipated outcomes
 - Next, students can identify tangible steps for how they will pursue their anticipated outcomes
 - Finally, students will share their action steps to identify ideas or fine tune action items

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ENGAGEMENT WHILE ABROAD

- While abroad, encourage students to continue their reflections
 - Use journals, an online course environment (i.e. Blackboard), a blog, or even Facebook to write, share, and reflect
 - Provide prompts or reflective questions to guide the process
 - Identify the intersection of their academic, internship, research, and service pursuits and their social activities and encourage students to view them as learning opportunities that can further each other



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POST EXPERIENCE TOOLS

- Because employers often lack knowledge about outcomes gained from study abroad or other international activities students need to be equipped with the language to promote their experience as one of significant value
- Advisors and professionals who work with students can utilize the following worksheet illustrating the STAR model to help facilitate the appreciation and articulation of international experiences



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TOP COMPETENCIES AS IDENTIFIED BY EMPLOYERS

COMPETENCIES	SITUATION/TASK	ACTION	RESULT	BENEFIT TO SELF/OTHERS/ ORGANIZATION
Understanding cultural differences in the workplace				
Interacting with people who hold different interests, values, or perspectives				
Adapting to situations of change				
Gaining new knowledge from experiences				

EXAMPLE

COMPETENCIES	SITUATION/TASK	ACTION	RESULT	BENEFIT TO SELF/OTHERS/ ORGANIZATION
<p>Understanding cultural differences in the workplace</p>	<p>On study abroad in Japan, I had set out to do a qualitative study on learning habits of elementary children</p>	<p>In order to do the study, I needed to set up times to observe Japanese children studying in after-hours study programs. Unlike in the US, I could not just contact a after-school center and come in to watch. I spoke with several faculty both in Japan and in the US, including my advisor and also got referrals to people at the university that I was studying to make introductions for me and to provide for me an understanding of the appropriate cultural norms. I was then able to perform my observations.</p>	<p>Knowing that there are culturally different norms in Japan, but not knowing exactly what they were, I utilized my network and other resources to find out what I needed to do in order to not be rude or in appropriate, yet accomplish my research goal. In the process, I also revisited people from my network, shared with them my current studies, and checked back with them on the results. I also made an important discovery on the difference in learning styles of Japanese children versus American children.</p>	<p>A potential employer would find this experience of value because they not only know that I am aware of cultural differences in my potential coworkers (or clients), but that I will take the necessary steps to learn about how to deal with them appropriately. For example, if I worked for a market research firm and needed to conduct a presentation on a research study to an international client, I would know that I needed research and incorporate into my presentation message and style culturally appropriate information.</p>



**QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS
WELCOME!**

Thank you!

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