



# Unpacking Study Abroad

## Marketing Your Experience

*You spent a few months overseas and have come back a 'changed' person...*

*How do you articulate those changes to others and explain what it means?*

### What Employers Want

Ability to work in a Team Structure  
Verbal Communication  
Decision Making/Problem Solving  
Ability to obtain and process information  
Ability to plan, organize, & prioritize  
Ability to analyze quantitative data  
Technical knowledge related to job  
Proficiency with computer software

Ability to create and/or edit written reports  
Ability to sell or influence others

Source: *Job Outlook 2012, NACE*

### Ideal International Profile

Study or work abroad (intern/volunteer)  
Become active in other cultures  
Language skills  
Economic and geographic knowledge  
Writing and analytical skills  
Computer skills  
Business/project management skills  
Organizational and leadership skills (people skills)  
Intercultural Communication skills  
Coping and adapting abilities

*My World Abroad (Quick Guide)*

### Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are sometimes referred to as functional or liberal arts skills. These are skills every employer evaluates in your resume, cover letter, or interview. Transferable skills are *not* major specific.

- Critical Thinking Skills - *Calculate, Analyze, Evaluate, Budget*
- Information Management Skills - *Compile, Synthesize, Evaluate*
- Human Relationships/Interpersonal Skills - *Teach, Lead, Appreciate, Cooperate, Influence*
- Management/Planning/Organization - *Coordinate, Arrange, Delegate, Initiate, Supervise*
- Research & Investigative Skills - *Question, Analyze, Interpret, Experiment, Observe, Monitor*
- Communication Skills - *Speak, Write, Present, Promote, Listen, Consult*
- Valuing Skills - *Appreciate, Honor, Respect, Act Congruently*
- Personal Skills

For examples, see the Liberal Arts Skills PDF on the Center for Career Development website.

## Telling your STORY...with your career in mind

If you want employers to know about your intercultural skills, you have to discuss them in a way that is relevant to the organization! Think about your time abroad and develop stories that will reinforce the skills employers are interested in.

A few examples from *My World Abroad (Quick Guide: Career Tips After Your Time Abroad)*:

- Describe your roles working with local colleagues and in teams while abroad.
- Describe your encounters when meeting professionals.
- Speak about personal encounters that gave you insight into the local culture.
- Speak about the link between your country and the host country, especially in terms of the work place. Describe your professional skills through a story about a cross-cultural encounter that went wrong.

You only need three or four of these pre-scripted career stories. Often, one well developed story is enough to demonstrate a whole grouping of your professional skills/maturity, insightfulness, sound judgment, cross-cultural knowledge, etc.

# Incorporating Study Abroad into Interview Responses

## PRACTICE:

1. How has your college experience prepared you for your career?
2. Give me an example of a problem you've encountered and explain how you handled it?
3. Describe an experience in which you worked as part of a team.
4. Describe a situation where you felt you had not communicated well. How did you correct the situation?
5. Give me an example of a time you had to persuade other people to take action.
6. Tell about a time when you built rapport quickly with someone under difficult conditions.
7. Give an example of when you took a risk to achieve a goal. What was the outcome?
8. Tell me about a time when you had to handle and prioritize multiple responsibilities.
9. Describe the most significant or creative presentation which you had to complete.

## Study Abroad and your Resume

## It is not the activity, but what you accomplished through the activity that is of interest to the employer

Organize your resume to highlight the most relevant experiences and skills for a position/industry in which you are applying. This **may or may not** include a lot of detail regarding your Study Abroad experience. It completely depends on where you are applying.

**Option 1: Simply list** where you studied in the Education section of your resume:

Study Abroad: Umbra Institute, Perugia, Italy      Fall 2011

**Option 2: Include one or two bullet points that demonstrate skills** obtained:

*Study Abroad Experience:* Buenos Aires, Argentina Fall 2012

- Cultivated communication and cultural awareness skills through travel interactions with international classmates and host family.

**Option 3:** It may be appropriate (especially to return overseas or work in a company with a global presence) to offer more **detail on your travel credentials**.

Excerpt from *My World Abroad* (Quick Guide: Career Tips After Your Time Abroad)

“Consider writing a section about your travel experiences as if it were a job. Start with the job title “Cross-cultural and Professional Experience While Traveling Abroad.”

- Include countries and dates.
- Outline your experience abroad and the skills you developed. Consider describing your travel experience with bullets for your leadership roles when organizing fellow travelers, cross-cultural mentoring roles, integrating with local families and professionals, succeeding in overcoming challenges, and travel to remote or difficult areas.
- If you visited the offices of a world-renowned organization or with a prominent professional, reference this. Perhaps indicate how you overcame financial challenges to pay for your trip. List what fascinated you in your travels.

All of the above functions tell employers something about your professional personality. It points to your top skills, what you are good at, and what you enjoy.

If you are applying for international work, consider grouping all your international experience (work, volunteer, study abroad, international courses, travel and languages) under one heading for greater impact.”

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