



Study Abroad CAREER CONNECTION

Millersville University

CAREER CONNECTION

Connect your study abroad experience with your professional objectives. Take the five steps below to update your resume, practice framing your study abroad experience in conversation and begin using your connections to grow your professional network!

Skill Acquisition

Employers and graduate schools value the skills developed through studying abroad, and they'll no doubt be interested to hear about the new perspectives you gained for your major while abroad. **Hard skills** include foreign language proficiency, writing, computer or IT skills, hands-on skills that can be measured. **Soft skills** include people skills, social skills, etiquette, character and personality traits, attitudes, and emotional intelligence. A sample list of skills earned through study abroad are listed below. *Which ones do you most identify with? What would you add to this list?*

Communication / Language skills
Global professional/social network
Confidence
Risk-taking
Problem solving
Creativity

Adaptability
Resilience
Project management
Decision-making skills
Independence
Global world view
Cultural sensitivity

Showcase Skills

It's not enough to just list skills on a resume or discuss them in general terms. You should be able to talk about every skill you want to highlight on your resume or in an interview in detail, explain how you improved it through study abroad, and connect it to the job you are applying to. Students should ask themselves the following questions:

- What am I trying to communicate to a potential employer about my international experience?
- About its relationship to my academic major?
- About its relationship to this position?
- About its relationship to this graduate program?



Showcase Skills (cont.)

Below are examples on how you can frame the skills you gained from study abroad:

- **Leadership:** Strong leadership and team management skills are important in almost any environment. Knowing how to lead and inspire the people around you can help you establish stronger relationships, whether you're working on a class project with a group of international students or completing an internship abroad.

How to sell it - *Give specific example and expand upon it:*

- Took a leadership role on a campus team or organization while abroad
- Organized an excursion and event for other international students

- **Communication Skills:** Strong written, public speaking, and negotiation skills are important to communicating effectively, particularly in an unfamiliar environment like a new country.

How to sell it - *Give specific example and expand upon it:*

- Passed proficiency examination in [name of language] or obtained certificate for intensive language study at [name of college or institute].
- Have a basic command of the local language to use it in practical situations.

- **Cultural Awareness:** Our experiences, values, and cultural backgrounds guide our viewpoints and actions. Studying abroad reminds you to be cognizant of both yours and others' perspectives. Remember that what is considered appropriate in one culture can be inappropriate in another.

How to sell it - *Give specific example and expand upon it:*

- Self-confident, yet able to listen and learn from people whose value systems are different.
- Able to imagine, forecast, analyze or address business situations from a different cultural frame of reference.

- **Problem Solving and Flexibility:** Adaptability is an increasingly important value for innovative organizations. Studying abroad stretches participants in ways that they don't often expect.

How to sell it - *Give specific example and expand upon it:*

- Creatively solved problems by applying familiar concepts to unfamiliar situations.



Study Abroad on a Resume/Application

IPS provides the following tips for adding your study abroad program to your resume. The most important thing to know when deciding which tips to follow, is understanding what the resumes and CVs in your field look like and what the field's expectations are.



→ Traditional & Service-Learning Experiences:

- If you attended an international university to earn academic credit, you should include the international university to the "Education" section of your resume.
- You can also add it as a sub-bullet under your Millersville University degree as an activity you participated in.
- If you participated in a short faculty-led program (MAPS), you can add it to the "Education" section of your resume as a sub-bullet under your Millersville University degree or to a separate "Volunteer" section.

→ Professional Experiences:

- If you conducted research abroad, it could fall under the "Education" section of your resume as a sub-bullet under your Millersville University degree. However, if you are going into a research field it could be added to a separate research / professional experience section.
- If you participated in a professional experience abroad, add the name of the international employer to the "Work Experience" section of your resume.
- If you choose this option, be sure to expand on your internship or placement responsibilities.
- You will also want to save your placement information, such as their address, your supervisor's contact information and others for future applications or future recommendations.

→ Graduate School Applications:

All graduate school applications are different. In some cases, you will be able to share a copy of your resume or CV. However, in other cases you may want to include that you participated in study abroad elsewhere on the application, such as a personal statement or essay. Like employers, academics value the skills developed through studying abroad, and they'll no doubt be interested to hear about the new perspectives you gained on your subject while abroad. Consult your academic advisor for advice on this, or you can always inquire with the graduate program director/coordinator or admissions office at your graduate school.

Resume Examples

As explained on the previous page, most of the time your study abroad experience will be shown in the “Education” section of your resume. Below are two examples:

EDUCATION

January – May 2021
France)

Université de Caen, Basse-Normandie (Caen,
Semester Abroad
Intensive French Language Study

January 2022

Millersville University
Marauders Abroad Program (Stockholm, Sweden)
ERCH 495: Practicum Experience Abroad

If the position you are applying for values professional work experience or targeted skills, you may want to highlight the programs differently on your resume. Below are two examples:

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

August – December 2020

EduBest English Academy (Seoul, South Korea)
Co-teacher for Grade 9

June – July 2020

Queen’s University Belfast
International Summer School
8-week Conflict Transformation program
Skills gained: Peacebuilding, Research Methods in
Conflict Transformation, Intervention & Integration

If you volunteered or interned abroad, you can also add entries like those shown above to a “Relevant Experience” or “Volunteer Experience” section. Be sure to list what the internship or volunteer position entailed (ex. Assisted students with registration) as you would with your employment entries.



Remember to tailor your resume to what you are applying for. It shouldn't always stay the same!

Cover Letter Examples

Just like resumes, your cover letter should be adjusted for each new job or graduate school application. Use your cover letter as a place to explain how study abroad changed you and highlight the skills you gained through your experience. Make it engaging and don't be afraid to include non-traditional study abroad experiences like short term programs or courses abroad. Be sure to include:

- Why you are interested in the job/graduate program
- Why the employer/school should be interested in you
- How the position relates to your study abroad experience or not

Below are three excerpts showcasing potential answers to these prompts within a cover letter:

In June 2020, I pursued my dream of visiting Northern Ireland by studying abroad at Queen's University Belfast. During my four weeks abroad, I was enrolled in a Conflict Transformation program which included a course in Irish History and Culture. After seeing the impacts of war and conflict on local economies firsthand, I was inspired to alter my course of study to focus on international business ethics rather than business alone. I plan to pursue this topic further, and your department's program in international business law would provide me with the knowledge and skills needed to effect meaningful change in this arena.

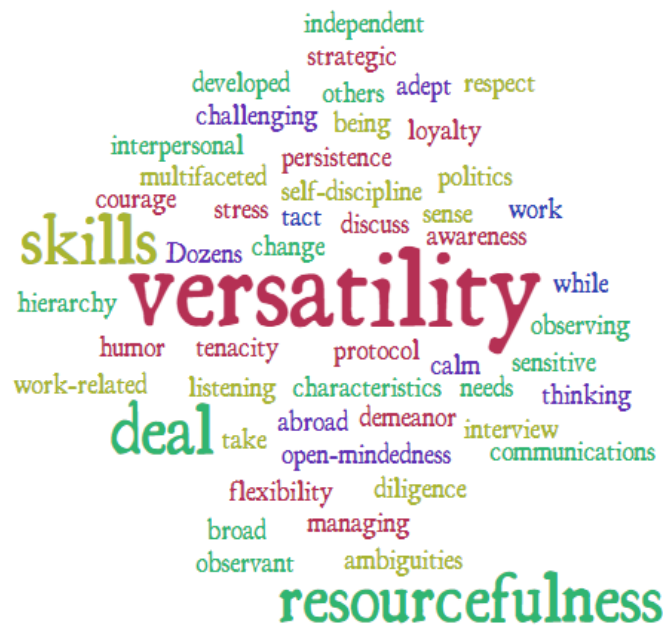
While my language skills began developing with my undergraduate French studies, my translation abilities were particularly enhanced through spending a semester in Caen last year. While there I took part in an intensive French curriculum with a heavy emphasis on phonetics. These classes, combined with my experience living with a French host family who spoke no English and enjoyed discussing politics over dinner, ensured my proficiency in conveying complex information and ideas such as those which could be expected in this position.

In the spring of last year, I took a course abroad in Stockholm, Sweden. During this time, I was able to complete my practicum in a Swedish school, however the real education I received was outside of the classroom. Spending an extended period in a culture so different from my own provided me with an invaluable course on myself, my own culture, and how to communicate within, through, and outside of that cultural context. This change in perspective was the push I needed to be able to honestly evaluate the education system in the US and in other countries, and to explore how perspective plays a vital role in how students learn. I am eager to put this new perspective, as well as my understanding of advanced STEM instruction and integrative science, to use for your school district.



Sell the Interview

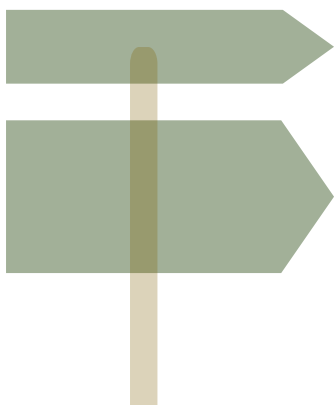
A good interview is about telling a good story. It's about weaving a narrative in response to questions about your ability to do a job, carry out your duties, and adapt to the organization and its expectations of staff. When speaking to employers, address the value of both the general and the specific skills you developed while studying abroad. It's important not to assume that the interviewer will realize how your international experience is relevant to your candidacy. Examples might include:



An interviewer may provide you with an opportunity to tell a story based upon your international experience. Try to keep your answers from being lengthy, and connect your responses to the job, office, company, or graduate school to which you are applying,

Questions may be posed like these:

- What did you learn about yourself as a result of your study abroad experience?
- Why did you choose to study in [name of country]? Why was it important to you?
- How did you get engaged in the local culture outside the classroom?
- Can you describe a time when you had to change your behavior to accommodate or adjust to different local conditions?



Networking

Networking is the process of identifying contacts (including U.S. and international faculty, staff, fellow participants, locals) who you believe can contribute to your knowledge and understanding of the local job market or sector you are interested in. Below are a few tips on how you can brush up on your skills and gain valuable career insights:

- Keep track of the contacts you make on the program, whether they are other participants or locals. If you have an interest in pursuing work in their field, this contact list will be invaluable when you return home and want to follow up with individuals.
- If a homestay is part of your program, use this opportunity to learn about the culture, economics, and politics of your local community. Conducting these conversations will make you a better-informed person when you're meeting with other professionals. Your homestay family may be able to connect you to local networks if you desire to work abroad in that location in the future.
- It's hard to maintain contact after you return home. If you haven't left yet, plan a Zoom/Skype/WhatsApp or other virtual meeting for a month after you return. A date already booked on your calendar is harder to forget.
- Spending some personal/family vacation time abroad soon after studying abroad? International friends visiting the U.S.? Reach out to meet up with them and catch up with them about their life and career/school. You would likely be at similar professional levels and can share stories and tips.
- Connect with the Experiential Learning and Career Management Office (ELCM,) your home academic department, and IPS to see if you can be connected with Millersville alumni who currently work abroad. Use the list of alumni you obtained to set up appointments for "informational" interviews. Introduce yourself and request a brief meeting to review the career field they're in, the current state of the job market in the field, how their work is or is not linked to their undergraduate or graduate studies, and what advantages they see in working abroad.





On-Campus Career Services

The Experiential Learning and Career Management (ELCM) Office at Millersville University offers even more career advice and services completely free to students!

Continue learning how to translate your study abroad experience into your career with ELCM services that include:

- Advice on how to strengthen your cover letter to articulate how your study abroad experience is an asset for an employer.
- Resume review & professional feedback for improvement.
- Mock interviews to practice articulating what you learned and how you strengthened your intercultural & professional skills.

Study Abroad + Career Information Breakdown

World Perspective



Expand their world view & travel experience

Career Outlook



Enhance their career opportunities with invaluable experience

Communication



Strengthen communication team building & adaptability skills

Culture



Experience & learn another culture first hand

Global Network



Make new friends from around the world

Language



Learn another language & dialect

Discovery

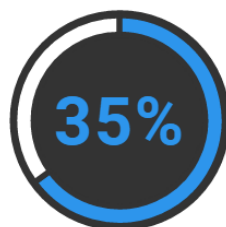


Discover new things about their own culture

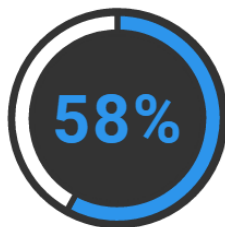
Leadership



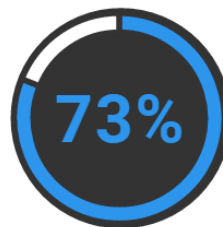
Boost student's confidence & community leadership



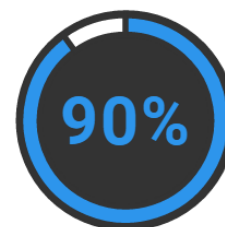
of participants report a notable difference in their career plans



of students who participate in study abroad programs actively pursue careers in other countries



of employers view study abroad experience as an advantage in making hiring decisions



of employers believe that students who study abroad possess highly desirable skills

SOURCES: AMERISPAN . FRONTIERS JOURNAL.



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PROGRAMS AND SERVICES