

WELCOME HOME 101

We're Happy to Have  Back!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Learning Abroad would like to thank the Career and Professional Development Center for their contributions to this packet. We would also like to thank the countless students who make our office possible. This packet is for you! Welcome home!





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“In a sense, it is the coming back, the return, which gives meaning to the going forth. We really don’t know where we’ve been until we come back to where we were — only where we were may not be as it was because of who we’ve become, which, after all, is why we left.”

*– Bernard from
“Northern Exposure,”
upon returning from Africa*

COMING HOME:

Navigating Reverse Culture Shock & Transitioning Back Home

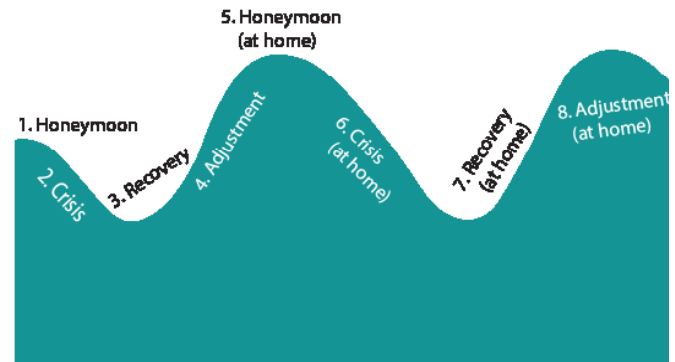
Many people agree that learning abroad can be one of the most meaningful and life-changing experiences of one's college years, and indeed, one's whole life. For this reason, coming home after learning abroad can be quite a big feat.

The process of adjustment one experiences when coming back home after a learning abroad program is similar to the adjustment process one initially experiences when going abroad. These adjustment processes follow the up-and-down patterns expressed in the **W Curve graphic** to the right.

Think of this graphic as a roller coaster depicting different phases of culture shock and reverse culture shock. The first four stages demonstrate the first culture shock you may experience when you go abroad, while the latter four stages represent the reverse culture shock you may experience when you come home.

At first, when you come home, you may experience a honeymoon phase of reverse culture shock, when you feel relieved, elated, excited, and proud to return to your familiar way of life. Gradually, however, you may spiral into a crisis mode, when all of the people, places, and things that were once familiar and comfortable for you at home all of a sudden seem foreign, distant, and un-relatable. You may start to miss a lot of things from your lifestyle abroad that you feel frustrated about not being able to experience at home. While these feelings can be difficult at first, eventually you recover as you come to accept the similarities and differences between your lifestyles abroad and back home.

This roller-coaster-like process of reverse culture shock is completely normal for recently-returned Learning Abroad participants. As James L. Citron and Vija G. Mendelson (2005) advocate, thinking positively about your transition back home can help you navigate reverse culture shock and ease your transition back home. To them, "Being able to think optimistically about what you've learned abroad not only helps you feel better as you process your feelings about coming home, but it can also help you articulate how you are different—to family, friends, teachers, mentors, and current and potential employers".



Furthermore, they state:

“If you are part of the small percentage of the world’s citizens that has had the opportunity to live life on another culture’s terms, you’ve probably found that the experience awakened your senses and led to new understandings and personal growth. Coming home might feel like a letdown after all that excitement. But it’s also an opportunity to put your new skills to use. The challenge now is to take both your new knowledge and your exploration skills and integrate them permanently into your life ahead. It might sound like a daunting task, but, supported by your roots, the new you is destined to thrive.” p. 23

To help you realize the truth in Citron and Mendelson’s words, Learning Abroad’s Re-Entry Team has designed this packet for you to help you adjust to being back home and get the most out of your Learning Abroad experience. The resources in this packet help you reflect on your time abroad, navigate the re-entry process, articulate your new skills, get involved with on-campus resources, and prepare yourself for your future career. We hope you make use of this packet as you transition back home. As you go forth, remember that staff from Learning Abroad and other U of U offices, family, friends, and other community members are here to help you along the way!

COMMON CHALLENGES FOR RETURNED STUDENTS

Returning home after being abroad for any length of time can be both a challenging experience and an uncertain time. Your mood can fluctuate often and it can be difficult to readapt to your familiar surroundings. On the other hand, the re-entry period can be a time to further the personal growth, empathy, and adaptability you gained while you were abroad. As you adjust to life back home, take comfort in knowing that many returned students like you encounter similar challenges during the re-entry process. In fact, Professor Bruce LaBrack, from the University of the Pacific, has identified what he believes are the top 10 challenges for returned students on his website *What's Up with Culture?* To help you both anticipate and mitigate experiencing these challenges during your readjustment process back home, we would like to share Professor LaBrack's list with you. The University of Utah's Learning Abroad Team is grateful to Bruce for allowing us to share his words of wisdom with you.



1. Boredom

"After all the newness and stimulation of a student's time abroad, the return to family, friends, and old routines (however nice and comforting) can seem very dull. It is natural to miss the excitement and challenges that characterize study in a foreign country, but it is up to the student to find ways to overcome such negative reactions and keep in mind that a bored person is also boring."

2. "No One Wants to Hear"

"One thing students can count on upon their return: no one will be as interested in hearing about their adventures and triumphs as they will be in sharing those experiences. This should not be considered a rejection of them or their achievements abroad. However, once others have heard the highlights of students' experiences, further interest on the audiences' part is probably unlikely. Students should be realistic in their expectations of how fascinating their journey is going to be for everyone else. They should be brief in their descriptions."

3. They Can't Explain

"Even when given a chance to explain all the sights and feelings of their study abroad experience, students are unlikely to be able to relay them coherently. It is very difficult to convey this kind of experience to those who do not have similar frames of reference or travel backgrounds, no matter how sympathetic they are as listeners. Students can tell people about their trip, but may fail to make others understand exactly how or why they felt that way. This is okay."

4. Reverse "Homesickness"

"Just as students probably missed home for a time after going abroad, it is just as natural to experience some "reverse" homesickness for the people, places, and things that they grew accustomed to as a student overseas. To an extent, this feeling can be reduced by writing letters or email messages, telephoning, and generally keeping in contact. Feelings of loss are an integral part of international sojourns and must be anticipated and accepted as a natural result of study abroad."

5. Relationships Have Changed

"It is inevitable that when students return, they will notice that some relationships with friends and family will have changed. Just as they have altered some of their ideas and attitudes while abroad, the people at home are likely to have experienced some changes. These changes may be positive or negative, but expecting that no change will have occurred is unrealistic. The best preparation is flexibility, openness, minimal preconceptions, and tempered optimism."

ON A GOOD DAY

- I have the flexibility to fit in anywhere. I adapt easily. I feel horizontally rooted.
- I am bilingual/multilingual.
- I can empathize with multiple viewpoints
- I respect cultural differences.
- I have tolerance for ambiguity.
- I feel challenged/empowered by new experiences.
- I am aware of global issues (news, politics, media, resource distribution, etc.).
- I accept challenges to my lifelong beliefs and values.
- I have a more complex/defined sense of self.
- I act more socially responsible.
- I enjoy a personal connection to the larger world; I feel like a "global citizen."
- I take risks and embrace the unknown.
- I am curious and eager to learn.

ON A BAD DAY

- I don't seem to fit in anywhere. I resist change. I feel rootless.
- I am semi-lingual in two or more languages.
- I am frustrated by the narrow-mindedness of people at home.
- I become impatient with monoculturalism.
- I am frequently indecisive.
- I feel bored by the mundane.
- I am uninformed about local issues and unable to apply what I've learned about the larger world to my life at home.
- I am becoming resocialized into U.S. patterns of thought.
- I have a more fragmented sense of conflicting identities.
- I act judgmentally and self-righteously in the face of others' social choices.
- I feel disconnected/alienated from my home environment.
- I feel overwhelmed by the known and the unknown.
- I feel depressed and reluctant to engage.

6. People see the “Wrong” Changes

“Sometimes people may concentrate on small alterations in returned students’ behavior or ideas and seem threatened or upset by these changes. Others may ascribe any “bad” traits to the influence of their time abroad. These incidents may be motivated by jealousy, fear, or feelings of superiority or inferiority. To avoid or minimize such reactions, it is necessary for returned students to monitor themselves and be aware of the reactions of those around them, especially in the first few weeks following their return. Normally, this phase passes quickly if students do nothing to confirm others’ stereotypes.”

7. People Misunderstand

“A few people will misinterpret students’ words or actions in such a way that communication is difficult. For example, what students may have come to think of as humor (particularly sarcasm, banter, etc.) and ways to show affection or establish conversation may not be seen as wit, but aggression or “showing off.” Offers of help in the kitchen can be seen as criticism of food preparation, new clothing styles may be seen as provocative or inappropriate, references to their host country or use of a foreign language as boasting. Students should be aware of how they may look to others and how their behavior is likely to be interpreted.”

8. Feelings of Alienation/Critical Eyes

“Sometimes the reality of being back “home” is not as natural or enjoyable as the place the students had constructed as their mental image. When real daily life is less enjoyable or more demanding than they had remembered, it is natural to feel some alienation, see faults in the society they never noticed before, or even become quite critical of everyone and everything for a time. This is no different than when they first left home. Mental comparisons are fine, but students should keep these observations to themselves until they regain a balanced cultural perspective.”



International Studies Abroad



Caitlin Janeway 2010



Abeni Czajowski 2016

9. Inability to Apply New Knowledge and Skills

“Many returnees are frustrated by the lack of opportunity to apply newly gained social, linguistic, and practical coping skills that appear to be unnecessary or irrelevant. To avoid ongoing annoyance, students should adjust to reality as necessary, change what is possible, be creative and patient, and above all, use the cross-cultural adjustment skills they acquired abroad to assist their own re-entry.”

10. Loss/Compartmentalization of Experience

“Being home, coupled with the pressures of job, family, and friends, often combine to make returning students worry that somehow they will “lose” the experience, that it will become compartmentalized like souvenirs or photo albums. Students do not have to let that happen. They should maintain their contacts and also talk with people who have had similar experiences. They should practice their language skills and remember and honor both their hard work and the fun they had while abroad.”

These ten challenges are the most commonly experienced difficulties faced by students when they return from abroad. Students often find themselves caught off guard, having to readjust to people, places, and activities that were once familiar. They may have to learn to see them in a new light, as some changes may have occurred while they were away. The chart on page 9 depicts how returned students can feel both on a good day and a bad day after returning home. We hope by looking at this chart that you will be able to identify when you are having a bad day, and try your best to transform your mood into how you feel on a good day whenever that happens.

ADVICE FOR RETURNED STUDENTS: How to Combat Culture Shock

Returning home often involves “Reverse Culture Shock.” This concept is best defined by the U.S. Department of State as the “psychological, emotional and cultural aspects of reentry” whereby “many of the same events and circumstances that create stress when adapting to a foreign culture also create stress in the return trip.” The primary stressors that contribute to reverse culture shock are changes in routines and lack of familiarity. Adjusting to a foreign culture and spending less time in one’s home culture(s) causes a shift in perceptions. Home may be different from what you knew, what it was when you left, and what you expect it to be like when you return.

The U.S. Department of State outlines three main factors you should consider when returning to your home culture after being abroad:

1. Home has changed

While you were abroad, events and new developments may have occurred. At times, these changes can be shocking, disorienting, and unwelcomed. These changes can occur both on the community-level and on a relationship-level with family and friends. When you come back, expect to find that some change has occurred since you were away so that you can prepare yourself for this change. Preparing yourself for this can help provide clarity and ease your transition back home.

2. You have changed

As you spent time abroad, you likely adopted some cultural practices of your host country, learned new traditions, and developed new perspectives on life. As a result, your perceptions of what “home” is and what may feel comfortable may be different for you by the time you return. How you have adapted to experience feelings, relationships, routines, and familiar patterns of interaction abroad may influence your new sense of what it feels like to be home. Living abroad can add to your experiences as an individual and impact your feelings and relationships with your home. Accepting that both you and your home environment have changed may ease your transition once you return.

3. You have adapted to another culture and now you must readapt

After adjusting to another culture and adopting new traditions and routines, the transition of returning can be challenging. You often will have to relearn patterns and adjust to new routines. It is okay to feel frustrated as you attempt to readjust. These feelings are common. While it may take some time getting used to these new routines and patterns, eventually you will readjust, just as you did while you were abroad.



Deandra Lanier 2010

There are a few things you should keep in mind as you prepare to come back. Not many people prepare for the return, and this is when the unexpected changes can be very stressful. Perceptions of home can greatly differ from reality, and often students can overly romanticize images of home while they are still abroad. It is important to remember the common challenges and stressors you used to experience, so that if you face them when you come home they will not be as flustering. You should also keep in mind that people at home may have changes in both obvious and subtle ways since you’ve been gone. When you return, people may react differently towards you and expect you to be the same as when you left. They may not have patience for, be ready for, or welcome the ways you have changed. Overall, reverse culture shock is not very commonly understood. Many people around you may be passive or intolerant towards you as you learn to readjust. However, as Professor Bruce LaBrack points out, there are several actions you can take to prepare yourself both socially and psychologically to adjust back home. Read his list of advice for returned students on the next page to learn how you can best prepare yourself for the re-entry process and mitigate the negative and challenging experiences that often come with reverse culture shock.

1. Prepare for the adjustment process

Returning home is like going abroad. Prepare yourself for the experience and the challenges that may come.

2. Give yourself time to adjust

This is one of the most important ways to combat reverse culture shock. Take the time to get comfortable being home again and familiarize yourself with your surroundings.

3. Understand that the familiar will seem different

You will see your surroundings in a new perspective, and that is ok.

4. There will be some cultural updates to catch up on

You may have to re-learn some aspects of your own culture, very much like what you had to do in learning a new culture while abroad.

5. Reserve judgments

Mood swings are common, so be aware of making snap judgements. Give yourself time for reflection and self-analysis.

6. Respond thoughtfully and slowly

Take the time to prepare answers to common questions and avoid overreacting or being impulsive.

7. Cultivate sensitivity

Communication is a two-way street, so listen to and show interest in what others did while you were abroad, just as much as you want them to listen to you and take interest in what you did while you were away.

8. Beware of comparisons

Comparing cultures is natural, however be sure not to show too much criticism/praise for either home or where you learned abroad. Maintain a healthy balance in what you say and don't assume you are an instant expert on your host country's culture.

9. Be flexible

Seek a balance between familiarizing yourself with home and sharing your new interests with others.

10. Seek support networks

It is helpful to seek people out who have been through this experience before. This manual is a resource we have put together to help you find these opportunities so you can better overcome reverse culture shock and ease your transition back home.

Now that you have returned home, your learning abroad experience doesn't have to end. There are many ways that you can apply and build upon the new knowledge, skills, and attitudes you gained abroad in your everyday life. There are many strategies you can use to translate what you learned abroad into lifelong learning, such as by:

1. Continuing your language learning and intercultural education

2. Getting involved in your campus community and resources, i.e.:

- a. Career services
- b. International Student & Scholar Services
- c. Student Affairs offices
- d. International volunteer & employment opportunities

3. Writing about your experiences

4. Involving your friends

5. Maintaining your international friendships and relationships

6. Making new international connections

Getting involved with your community and seeking opportunities on campus, such as **Learning Abroad's Global U Program**, can help you overcome the challenges of reverse culture shock!

More information on the Global U Program may be found at learningabroad@utah.edu.



Jenny Handel 2016

GLOBAL U PROGRAM

The Global U Program is designed to help you turn your international experience into transferable skills that are used in school, the community, at home, and at work. By combining learning abroad with Community Engagement, Career Development, Language Immersion, and Research Experience, students learn to articulate their skills in a valuable, marketable way. Students who complete the program are recognized with a Global U Pin for graduation and receive a certificate of completion.

Students who complete the program:

- Gain recognition with
 - Official Global U pin for Graduation
 - Certificate of completion
 - Annual recognition event
- Market their experience on job and graduate school applications

There are three phases to the Global U Program.



This is an optional, experiential program for all U of U students who participate in an approved Learning Abroad Program. A list of approved programs can be found in our Program Search. Non-credit activities will not appear on your transcript or fulfill graduation requirements. To determine if credit-bearing activities fulfill graduation requirements, contact your academic advisor. Students are not eligible to receive the certificate, participate in the awards ceremony, or receive the graduation pin until they satisfy all Global U Program requirements. Students are required to share their experiences through social media as part of the program. Registration fees for the Global U Program are non-refundable.

For more detailed requirements, please click [here](#).

GLOBAL U PROGRAM TESTIMONIAL EXAMPLE

Munich, Germany

Vlada Yaremenko



Program: Ludwig Maximillians University Exchange, Spring 2017

Major: International Studies & Music Minor

Earning the Community Engagement Badge:



While studying abroad in Munich, Germany, I got a chance to play in one of the town's community orchestras – Munich International Orchestra (MiO). This was a great opportunity for me to better my musicianship skills while also immersing myself in the German culture and learning about the local community. It was wonderful to get to know the music scene in Munich and to work with the orchestra to put on two performances for the public. We met for about three hours each week and at the end of the semester we performed two classical concerts. This experience benefited me on so many levels because I got to observe and play with a German orchestra, perform for the people, practice my German, and learn about German culture by engaging with the local community.

Earning the Language Immersion Badge:



I took a German language course and attended rehearsals that were taught in German. The German class met for three hours each week. However, it was much different learning German in the classroom and actually being in a situation where it was necessary to speak it. When I decided to join the Munich International Orchestra, I was afraid that I would not be able to understand anything. However, after a few weeks of constantly hearing German in the rehearsals and attending my German course, things got more exciting. I was able to apply and practice the language skills I learned in class, and by the end of the semester I was able to make small conversations and understand some of the things said to me. The combination of the German course and my time in the orchestra really helped me practice and retain everything I learned.

Transferable Skills:



Currently, I hold the position of the assistant concertmaster at the University of Utah Campus Symphony. While studying abroad and playing with the Munich International Orchestra, I was able to acquire some important skills that I can utilize both in my position as the assistant concertmaster and in my future career working in an international field. In the MiO, I learned how to effectively communicate with other musicians without using spoken language, as well as to pay better attention to the orchestra as a whole. Furthermore, I learned how to work with people from different backgrounds and in a completely different language. This experience definitely made me a better musician and gave me an opportunity to work with an international community.



"It has always been my dream to study abroad in Europe, and the University of Utah made this dream come true. This experience reassured me that I am on the right path and that working with and being around an international community is my passion. The world is too big to stay home."

REFLECTING ON YOUR LEARNING ABROAD EXPERIENCE

Note your top memory in each area.

Most thrilling memory:
Funniest moment:
Most challenging experience:
Biggest cultural mistake:
Biggest cultural success:
Most moving experience:
An important relationship:
An excursion I took:
Favorite class:
Greatest personal insight:
Favorite new food:
Greatest surprise:
Favorite new hobby:
Favorite place:
Greatest discovery:
Greatest lesson learned:

Summarize & generalize your experience. Explain what you took away from your experience and what you learned about yourself, human nature, and/or interacting across cultures.

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ARTICULATING YOUR SKILLS FROM LEARNING ABROAD

Employers wish for their future employees to embody certain skills. Come up with one *specific* example for how you have demonstrated each competency below. Think about examples that you experienced during your Learning Abroad program, or from other classes, previous jobs, volunteer work, student clubs, etc. Use a variety of experiences to show how well-rounded you are as a candidate!

Want more help? Visit your Career Coach: careers.utah.edu or email learningabroad@utah.edu

Skill: Description	Example		
	Problem/Situation	Action	Result
Critical Thinking: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and identify problems. Utilize available resources to solve and overcome problems.			
Intercultural Communication: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively across different cultures. Understand cultural differences and similarities. Communicate despite barriers.			
Appreciate Diversity: Build collaborative relationships with people from diverse backgrounds. Recognize, respect, and appreciate the complex diversity of different people and cultures.			
Leadership: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals. Use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. Lead others in formal/informal groups. Recognize the needs of others.			
Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g. punctuality, time management, ethical behavior, learning from mistakes.			
Confidence: Volunteer options and ideas, ask questions, initiate conversations, practice self-reliance, and accept responsibility in admitting ignorance.			
Creativity: Initiate new ideas, think about options and possibilities, improvise and experiment, and not be deterred by failure. Learn through listening and observing.			
Positive Mindset: Welcome constructive criticism, offer constructive support, aware of strengths, eagerness. Persevere in difficult and stressful situations.			
Flexibility: Adapt to new, changing, and unfamiliar environments. Exercise patience and level-headedness in difficult situations. Function with a high level of ambiguity.			

CREATING SMART GOALS AFTER YOUR LEARNING ABROAD PROGRAM

Now that you have returned from your Learning Abroad program, you can set SMART goals for yourself to further your personal, professional, and academic growth. Contact Learning Abroad at learningabroad@utah.edu or your Career Coach at careers.utah.edu to get help setting your goals!

SMART goals are:

Specific – Consider who, what, where, why, and how in developing the goal

Measurable – Include a numeric or descriptive measurement

Attainable – Consider the resources needed to set a realistic goal

Relevant – Make sure the goal is consistent with your mission

Time-bound – Set a realistic deadline



Think about setting goals in the following areas:

- *intercultural skills*
- *self-care*
- *community engagement*
- *academic reintegration*
- *language immersion*
- *social reintegration*
- *career development*
- *research experience*
- *international experience*



GOAL 1: _____

CURRENT DATE: _____ **DATE TO ACHIEVE GOAL:** _____

I will take the following steps to achieve this goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

GOAL 2: _____

CURRENT DATE: _____ **DATE TO ACHIEVE GOAL:** _____

I will take the following steps to achieve this goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

GOAL 3: _____

CURRENT DATE: _____ **DATE TO ACHIEVE GOAL:** _____

I will take the following steps to achieve this goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What will you **DO IN THE NEXT 24 HOURS** to start achieving your goals?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

TRANSLATING YOUR LEARNING ABROAD EXPERIENCE TO AN EMPLOYER

Many people describe their learning abroad experience by simply saying “It was awesome!”, “It was amazing!”, or “I had the time of my life!” However, these descriptions don’t provide a lot of detail. To communicate the value of your international experience to an employer effectively, it is important to learn how to articulate exactly how and why your experience was amazing so that employers understand the unique values, interests, skills, knowledge, and experiences you gained that set you apart from students who haven’t learned abroad.

To help you get started, here are some examples of particular skills and qualities you may have gained during your time abroad that you could talk about with employers:

- Ability to adapt to new environments
- Appreciation of diversity and demonstrated ability to work effectively with diverse individuals
- Problem-solving and comfort with ambiguity
- Awareness of global issues
- Flexibility and patience
- Foreign language proficiency
- Inquisitiveness, curiosity, and open-mindedness
- Self-confidence and independence
- Willingness to take initiative



Tips:

Refer to this list of 75 long-term outcomes from an international experience to think about more skills and qualities you may have gained:

http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/pub/2.3.1 - Seventy-five_long_te.htm.

Discover more action verbs you could use at

<http://careers.utah.edu/find-job/verbs.php>.

Here are some action verbs you could use to describe your experience on your resume, in a cover letter, and in interviews:

Adapted	Immersed	Overcame
Cooperated	Improved	Practiced
Developed	Initiated	Realized
Enhanced	Lived	Represented
Exchanged	Managed	Recognized
Fostered	Observed	Shared
Gained	Organized	Traveled

Self-Reflection

Before talking to an employer about your experience, think about which stories highlight the new skills, knowledge, attitudes, perspectives, and experiences you gained from your learning abroad experience. Answering these questions may help you start building your stories:

- How did your learning abroad experience enhance your knowledge, skills, and understanding of your intended career field? What unique qualities did you gain from your international experience that set you apart from students who have not learned abroad outside of the US?
- How did learning abroad enhance your understanding of leadership and teamwork? Can you think of one example of a time when you demonstrated leadership and another example of a time when you collaborated effectively on a team while you were abroad?
- How did you adjust/adapt to your new cultural surroundings? Share examples from academic, social, and work settings. How did these influence your ability to interact successfully with others?
- How did you problem-solve, step outside of your comfort zone, and become more comfortable with ambiguity? Share a time when you faced a challenging situation and how you overcame that challenge.
- Did you gain a new appreciation for the current events/issues in the country/region where you studied? If you did, share an example.
- What was the most significant thing you learned about yourself, locals, your host culture, and the culture of the United States through your learning abroad experience?

Tip: Use the resources at http://careers.utah.edu/career-exploration/known_yourself.php to enhance your self-understanding and discover insights on your personality, values, interests, and skills.

Cover Letter

Think through how your experience relates to your intended career field. Then develop a strategy to specifically address this in your cover letter. Articulate the skills or qualities you gained from your experience and how they will benefit an employer. Then, for each skill or quality you list, give an example of how you gained/honed that skill while you learned abroad. See the examples below:

- My experience living in Ecuador will enhance my ability to communicate and interact effectively with the local Latino population this position will work closely with. Greeting new people daily during my learning abroad experience helped me hone my Spanish language skills that I will be able to use with the local Latino population.
- Studying in Brazil provided me with unique insights into the country's education disparities and ignited my passion for helping disadvantaged and underrepresented students with an organization such as yours. Seeing Brazil's educational system first-hand inspired me to be more mindful of the privileges I experienced during my educational experience in the US and to become an advocate for disadvantaged and underrepresented students who have not had the same privileges.
- My studies in Japan provided me with great insight into the cultural differences that influence customers in different countries. For example, while advertisements in the United States are often competitive and tell you why you should buy one company's product instead of another, advertisements in Japan don't mention their competitors; instead, they use powerful visuals and music to evoke your emotion and help you imagine how good it would feel to use their product so you buy it. These unique insights I gained while I was abroad will improve my ability to contribute to your international marketing initiatives.

Tip: See the sample cover letter in this booklet for reference and visit <http://careers.utah.edu/find-job/cover-letters.php> to see more sample cover letters.

Résumé

There are a variety of places where you can put your learning abroad experience on your resume to share it with employers. To decide where to put it, think about where it would make the most sense to highlight it for the particular position you are applying for and where it would make the most sense for an employer to see it on your resume. Here are some ways you can share it on your resume:

- List the full name of your learning abroad program in the education section if you attended a particular learning abroad program.
- If you held a job, internship, or volunteer position while abroad, you could list it in your relevant experience section.
- If the work you did abroad isn't directly related to your intended career, you could list it in your additional work experience section and focus on the cross-cultural learning and skills you gained in your bullet points.

Tip: See the sample resumes in this booklet for reference and visit <http://careers.utah.edu/find-job/samples.php> to see more sample resumes.

Networking & Interviews

Employers don't want you to just tell them what skills, knowledge, and experiences you gained while you learned abroad, they want you to show them. To show them, prepare a couple of stories and examples from your time abroad that demonstrate the unique skills, qualities, values, attitudes, and experiences you gained while you were abroad. Having these stories already prepared is important because employers often base how you would handle a situation when working for them on how you have handled similar situations in the past. Using this PART technique to create each of your examples/stories from your time abroad will help you demonstrate the value of your learning abroad experience to employers whether you are meeting them for the first time through networking or an interview.

- Problem: What challenge/problem did you face?
- Action: What action did you take to overcome this challenge/problem?
- Result: What was the outcome/result of your action(s)?
- Takeaway: What lesson or takeaway did you learn from this experience? How could you use what you learned to better perform the position you're interviewing for? How could you use what you learned to benefit the employer you're interviewing with?

Tip: Refer to this list of sample interview questions to anticipate what employers might ask you and to plan out your answers using the PART technique before your interview: <http://careers.utah.edu/find-job/questions.php>. Also learn how to prepare for an interview by visiting <http://careers.utah.edu/find-job/intro.php>.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

John Hancock
201 S 1460 E, Salt Lake City, UT | 801-581-6186 | jstudent@university.edu

May 3, 2017

Rebecca Smith and Amy Charles
Senior Program Managers
International Studies Abroad
1112 W. Ben White Blvd
Austin, Texas 78704

Directed to a
specific individual

Dear Ms. Smith and Ms. Charles,

Highlights why they want to work
for this specific company.

My name is John Hancock and I recently graduated from the University of Utah with a BA in English and Spanish. As a new member of the ISA community, I am specifically drawn to the work at XYZ because I believe it lays the fertile ground for innovation and experimentation in the field of study abroad. For this, I am more than enthused that a position has opened up. I believe a [position name] requires a set of skills that I possess: academic writing and familiarity with the academy, experience coordinating with national and international institutions, and the ability to communicate across administrative levels.

Provides specific examples.

During my undergraduate career I developed fluency in the academic and institutional language of the university. As the leader of a successful accessible parking campaign I learned to wear the many hats that administrative initiatives demand. On the ground I was the passionate and approachable student leader raising awareness and gaining peer support. When seeking guidance from professors and deans I was a strategic and quantitative researcher and planner. And in meetings with the Assistant Provost I was a professional and sensible salesman, open to negotiations but committed a basic plan of action. These personal encounters with university officials directly influenced my writing. I grew proficient in the drafting of personal grants and proposals which allowed me to leverage my foreign language ability and volunteer experience into two university-funded summers Peru and Brazil. Immersion in several Peruvian and Brazilian organizations enabled me to develop similar writing and communicative skills in Portuguese and Spanish.

Showcases
the results
of their
actions.

Through administrative dealings I came to appreciate the countless positive things a university can do for its students when approached the right way. [Position Name] capitalizes on this potential and creates and manages truly alternative and exciting study abroad opportunities. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk further about [position name], the duties of [position name], and my qualifications for the position. Please refer to my resume for further information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



John Hancock

Ends on a positive note and
suggests an interview.

Jane Doe

201 South 1460 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84112
(801) 581-5624 • jane.doe@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering
University of Utah

May 2016
Salt Lake City, UT

SKILLS

Software: MATLAB; PSpice; Maple; AutoCAD; CST MWS; AWR MWO
Languages: Proficient in Arabic and moderately proficient in French

Highlight specific
language skills

SENIOR DESIGN PROJECT

Software Evaluation for Antenna Design: Group evaluation of electromagnetic simulation software for use as an instructional tool in the electrical engineering department. Several patch antennas were designed, fabricated and tested for design characteristics.

RELATED COURSE WORK

Engineering Electronics I
Engineering Electronics II
Digital Systems Design

Microwave Engineering I
Antenna Theory and Design
Digital Signal Processing

EXPERIENCE

SMAHT Ceramics, Inc
Technician

Salt Lake City, UT
August 2007 – May 2012

- Machined ceramic samples and prepared them for research and development.
- Performed light machine maintenance and production work.
- Operated injection-molding and lathe machine to produce composite ceramic samples.

International Rescue Committee

Job Developer

Salt Lake City, UT
October 2007–July 2008

- Helped refugees acquire self-sufficiency through employment
- Compiled detailed reports on refugees' status for the Department of Workforce Services.

EMPLOYMENT

ProEx Device Programming
Device Programmer

Don't forget about cultural experiences
you've had domestically!

Salt Lake City, UT
July 2014 – Present

- Perform manual and automatic programming of electronic devices.
- Check to ensure programming and shipping quality meet customer specs.

Deluxe Corporation
Press Operator

Salt Lake City, UT
August 2012 – March 2014

- Operated printing presses to produce business and personal checks.
- Performed light maintenance tasks to ensure high quality of checks.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Joint Relief Ministry
Administrator

Consider a broader "International
Experience" section if you have
multiple experiences to highlight.

Cairo, Egypt
February 2006 – February 2007

- Administered the Adult English Program for refugees in Cairo, Egypt.

University of Oviedo
Study Abroad Student

Oviedo, Spain
Summer 2011

- Gained strong sense of independence and global perspective while immersing in a summer-long, language intensive international experience.
- Quickly acclimated to a new environment and culture, embracing the opportunity to explore unique opportunities and challenges.

Use strong action verbs and descriptors
to demonstrate your skills and
articulate your experience

Joe Doe

2000 East Sun Way
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

801-555-5555
joe.doe@gmail.com

Education

Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications
University of Utah

December 2016
Salt Lake City, UT

- Emphasis in Public Relations
- Minor in Business
- Minor in Spanish

Study Abroad Experiences often fit well under your education section

Study Abroad: Oviedo, Spain

Summer 2015

- Gained strong sense of independence and global perspective while immersing in a summer-long, language intensive international experience
Fluent in both written and spoken Spanish
- Quickly acclimated to a new environment and culture, embracing the opportunity to explore unique opportunities and challenges

Highlight specific language skills gained from your experience

Experience

T-Mobile

Representative Sales Associate

May 2014-Present
Salt Lake City, UT

- Awarded top Representative Sales Associate November 2013
- Created new sales strategies for pre-pay services, resulting in top Representative Sales Associate in pre-pay sales
- Completed Certification in Handset Functionality & Reliability, Wireless Internet, PDA's, Bluetooth technology
- Volunteered in weekly inventory counts

1320 KFAN

Associate Producer "Brown & the Booner" Morning Show

July 2013-Present
Salt Lake City, UT

- Coordinated the Utah Jazz Rocky Mountain Review Camp
- Gathered news for show preparation on bi-weekly basis
- Planned and executed promotional events collaboratively with other Morning Show staff

Utah Jazz

Ticket Sales Representative

October 2012-May 2013
Salt Lake City, UT

- Achieved top five in sales among 30 sales representatives during a one year period
- Second highest amount of revenue in sales department for playoff ticket sales for 2011-2012

Volunteer/Service

Soldier Hollow Golf Course

Service Learning Project, University of Utah

Spring 2012
Midway, UT

- Consulted with course management on how to increase revenue with Marketing and Public Relations tactics
- Created an informational media guide, which will be used for future course events

UCareerPath

- [Going Global](#)

General

- [Indeed.com](#)- Students will find links to global job search engines in a variety of countries.
- [www.ihipo.com](#)- iHipo's mission is to help internationally-minded students and graduates find an internship/job and to advance their career.
- [Idealist.org](#)- Job and internship listings with U.S. and international non-profit agencies.
- [bunac.org](#)- BUNAC is a not-for-profit organization that specializes in sending young people on working holidays through work abroad and volunteer abroad programs. There is a program fee associated with this service.
- [www.rileyguide.com/internat.html](#)-The Riley Guide provides information on the international job search and also has links to country specific job banks.
- [Internationaljobs.org](#)- A comprehensive source of international careers for professionals, including international development jobs.
- [USAjobs.gov](#)—Listing of all U.S. government positions, both domestic and international
- [Devex.com](#)—The International Development Executive Group. Search Jobs.
- [ReliefWeb](#)-Job bank with postings in the humanitarian and development sectors

Ideas to Get Started:

- Get Experience
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Internships
 - Professional
- Get Educated
 - Country
 - Culture
 - Language
 - Industry
- Get Connected
 - Informational Interviews
 - Networking

Campus Resources

- Going Global (UCareerPath)
- Hinckley Institute of Politics
- Learning Abroad
- Bennion Center
- International Student & Scholar Services
- International and Area Studies (College of Humanities)
- Department of World Languages & Cultures (College of Humanities)

International Development

- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Habitat for Humanity
- Action Against Hunger
- HELP International
- Intrax

Teach Abroad

- Fulbright
- Council on International Educational Exchange
- Japan Exchange Teaching Programme
- Teaching Assistant Program in France
- Language and Culture Assistants in Spain
- Association for International Practical Training
- The International Educator
- International Language Program
- WorldTeach

Government

- U.S. Department of State
- Peace Corps

International Work in Utah

- World Trade Center Utah
- Utah Council for Citizen Diplomacy
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- HELP International
- Religious affiliates (LDS Church, Catholic Community Services, etc.)

International Education Graduate Programs:

- Monterrey Institute of International Studies (California)
- School for International Training (SIT) Graduate Institute (Vermont)
- Thunderbird School of Global Management (Arizona)

GOING ABROAD AGAIN

Work Abroad

- Opportunities for in-depth cross-cultural experience, personal development, expanding your knowledge of a foreign language, and preparing you for a future in a global society.
 - <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/work/is-work-abroad-for-me>
- **Teach**
 - There are multiple opportunities to teach English abroad without a teaching certification. The “credential” of being a native speaking and a bachelor’s degree may be the only requirements needed to obtain a job and a work permit in areas such as Asia and Eastern Europe.
 - <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/work/teaching-english-abroad>
 - CIEE Teach Abroad and CIEE TEFL Certification
 - Fullbright Teaching Assistantship
 - Teaching Assistant Program in France
 - U.S. Department of State: Teaching Overseas
- **Intern Abroad**
 - Internships can be found abroad or in the U.S. with an international organization. There are also academic programs that provide internship and service-learning opportunities alongside courses.
 - <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/work/types-of-work-abroad>
 - Hinckley Institute of Politics
 - They have global internships available for undergraduate and graduate students of all disciplines in over 50 countries. Their goal is to provide students with full-time, global work, cultural immersion, and career development opportunities.
 - <http://www.hinckley.utah.edu/global-internships-overview/>

Study/Research Abroad

- **Fulbright**
 - Study/Research Awards: Offered for projects in all Academic and Creative & Performing Arts fields. Applicants can propose their own independent study/research projects or, in some countries, can propose to enroll in a graduate program. Arts applicants, please proceed to the [Creative & Performing Arts Fields of Study](#) section for information about available fields and supplementary materials requirements.
- **Attend Graduate School Abroad**
- **Participate in a Faculty- led program** that is focused on language and cultural immersion or ones that work on research while you are abroad!

Volunteer Abroad

- Peace Corps
- SIT World Learning: Group Leader for Experiment in International Living
- Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellowships: Information at Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellowship

Reasons to Learn Abroad Again:

Improve Language Skills

- Learning abroad is a great opportunity to learn a language. It does not matter if you are already fluent in one or if you are a beginner. You will be fully immersed in the language and culture which is one of the best ways to study it.

See Twice as Many Places

- Gives you another opportunity to see a place you might not have the first time because you may not have had enough time, money, or confidence.

Stand out to employers

- International experience along with foreign language skills and insights into other cultures from learning abroad are things that employers love to see. On a resume it shows the ability to adapt to different environments bringing a sense of flexibility and resourcefulness. Independent thinkers and problem solvers who can interact well with a variety of people are skills employers want to see.

Become more independent

- Living abroad, no matter how long allows you to become more self-aware and independent in a new setting. Being away from what you are accustomed to is the ideal chance for you to gain independence.

Expand your comfort zone

- Studying abroad a second time will give you the opportunity to improve on the cross cultural skills you started to build on your first trip. You'll be able to tackle the problems that were scary on your first trip as if they were expected on your second one. You are able to use those experiences from your first trip to improve and learn for your second experience abroad.



Photos of Erica Janicki on her exchange program at the American College of Greece in 2016 and the Cuba: Complexity, Community, and Change faculty-led program in 2017

Resources:

University of Michigan Working Abroad resources: <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/work>
<https://www.uc.edu/international/study-abroad/returning-to-uc/going-abroad-again.html>
<http://www.thecollegetourist.com/the-benefits-of-studying-abroad-twice/>
<http://www.northwestern.edu/studyabroad/returnees/go-abroad-again.html>

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR RETURNED STUDENTS

BENNION CENTER

Union, RM 101 | 801-581-4811 | bennioncenter.org

Volunteer with the Bennion Center to pay your international experience forward and engage with the local international community. Complete service projects, participate in Service House dialogues, attend Issues & Action Luncheons, go on an Alternative Break, and more! Register for service projects, sign up for other activities, and check out upcoming events through the Bennion Center website!

CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

SSB, RM 350 | 801-581-6186 | careers.utah.edu

Infuse your resume, interviews, and your future career with your international experience with the help of CPDC. Learn how to articulate the skills you gained on your program and market yourself as a global citizen by attending workshops, job fairs, and other events! Meet with your Career Coach or contact CPDC to learn more!

DEPT. OF WORLD LANGUAGES & CULTURES

LNCO, RM 1400 | 801-581-7561 | languages.utah.edu

Fulfill your B.A. Language Requirement and strengthen your knowledge of diverse cultures' language, literature, film, art, history, and socio-political contexts through this department. Take multi-level language courses, join a language club, and apply to be a Peer Advisor. Explore the more than 20 linguistic and literary traditions on the website!

ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE (ELI)

Annex, RM 2202 | 801-581-4600 | continue.utah.edu/eli

Pay your English language skills forward by get involved with the English Language Institute. The ELI offers interesting and active classes for international students so they can master the English Language. Consider becoming a member of their fast-growing international family. Check out their website to learn more today!

FULBRIGHT

Bldg. 73, RM 223 | Prof. Howard Lehman, Representative | global.utah.edu/global-resources/Fulbright-student

Build upon your international experience by applying for the Fulbright US Student Program. It provides grants to US students wishing to perform research or teach English in a foreign country. Interested students should attend workshops and info sessions and meet with Howard Lehman, the U's Fulbright Representative, to learn more!

HINCKLEY INSTITUTE OF POLITICS (HIP)

Bldg. 72, RM 102 | 801-581-8501 | hinckley.utah.edu

Apply the skills you gained while you were abroad by getting involved with Hinckley. Get U of U credit and be eligible to apply for Learning Abroad Office for Global Engagement Scholarships by completing a customized Hinckley internship that meets your academic, personal, and professional goals. Attend Hinckley Forums and HIP Talks to learn about international politics, culture, history, etc. Explore Hinckley's opportunities and upcoming events through their website today!

INTERNATIONAL & AREA STUDIES (IAS)

CTIHB, RM 210 | 801-581-6101 | international-studies.utah.edu

Prepare to live and work in our globalized world through the International Studies Program. The interdisciplinary methods, language study, and direct international experience make it an inviting major alone or in combination with other programs. Take Cultures & Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAS) courses and pursue a foreign language major or minor. Visit the website today!

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLARS SERVICES (ISSS)

Union, RM 401 | 801-581-8876 | internationalcenter.utah.edu

The ISSS office serves as the primary campus contact for international students, scholars, and alumni. Use your intercultural skills to engage with the international community. Apply to the Ambassador Program, join the International Student Council for domestic and international students, attend International Nights hosted by international student clubs, and become a Peer Advisor. Check out ISSS's Facebook page and website for more information!

MUSE PROJECT (MY "U" SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE)

Sterling Sill Center, RM 128 | 801-587-3177 | muse.utah.edu

Personalize your U of U education with the MUSE Project. Tap into mentored learning opportunities and signature learning experiences (like Learning Abroad) that help develop your unique potential for intellectual and imaginative work. Become a MUSE Scholar, attend MUSE Casual Fridays, go to a Lunchtime Lecture, or visit MUSE's website or office to learn more!

OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH (OUR)

Sterling Sill Center, RM 005 | 801-581-8070 | our.utah.edu

Enhance your research skills through the Office of Undergraduate Research's opportunities: the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), the Undergraduate Research Scholar Designation (URSD), and the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS). Attend research-based workshops, apply for research and travel grants, and present or publish your research on local, state, and national levels. See the website for more info!

PEACE CORPS

Steve Price, Regional Recruiter | 801-529-7885 |

www.peacecorps.gov

Serving in the Peace Corps is a great way to apply and build upon the intercultural skills you gained on your Learning Abroad program. Immerse yourself in a new culture, learn a new language, and have the experience of a lifetime as a Peace Corps volunteer. Work with Steve Price to navigate the application process and create a competitive application today. Check out the website for details and upcoming Peace Corps events in the SLC region!

READING LIST

ARTICLES

[“Welcoming Home World Travelers”](#) by Terra Dotta

[“The Career Connection: Aligning Education Abroad with Employers”](#) by Terra Dotta

@yagirlkass 2016

BOOKS

CAREER GUIDES

Alternatives to the Peace Corps: A Guide of Global Volunteer Opportunities, Paul Blackhurst (2005)

Working World: Careers in International Education, Exchange and Development, Sherry Lee Mueller & Mark Overmann (2008)

NON-FICTION

Delaying the Real World – Make the World a Better Place: A Twenty Something’s Guide to Seeking Adventure, Colleen Kinder (2005)

The Turk Who Loved Apples: And Other Tales of Losing My Way Around the World, Matt Gross

The Unheard: A Memoir of Deafness and Africa, Josh Swiller

FICTION

The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho

On the Road, Jack Kerouac

THEORY/TRAVEL

The Art of Coming Home, Craig Storti (2003)

New American Expat: Thriving and Surviving Overseas in the Post-9/11 World, William Russell Melton (2005)

Maximizing Study Abroad, A Student’s Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use, R. Michael Paige, Andrew D. Cohen, Barbara Kappler, Julie C. Chi and James P. Lassegard (2002)

Burn Up or Splash Down: Surviving the Culture Shock of Re-Entry, Marion Knell (2006)

Students Abroad: Strangers at Home: Education for a Global Society, Norman L. Kauffmann, Judith N. Martin and Henry D. Weaver, with Judy Weaver (1992)



D. Dupree

MAGAZINES & OTHER SOURCES

[Abroad View](#)

[Matador Network](#)

[Glimpse](#)

[Transitions Abroad](#)

[Life After Study Abroad](#)

CONCLUSION: Now What?

Making the Most of Your Learning Abroad Experience

“Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

–Ralph Waldo Emerson

Returning from abroad is a unique experience where there are many opportunities for reflection, growth, and career development. As portrayed in this packet, the W Curve outlines reverse culture shock well and how similar the experience returning home is to going abroad. This resource packet aspires to highlight how to overcome reverse culture shock and the opportunities that await in using the skills and knowledge that you gained abroad. So now what?

Your learning abroad experience does not end with your return home. Making the most of your experience abroad depends on how you apply your newfound knowledge and the opportunities that are available on campus and in your local community. This resource guide provided information on the following ways to make the most of your experience:

- Methods for reflection on your time abroad.
- Advice to the challenges for Re-entry.
- How to articulate your new skills
- On campus resources
- Preparation for career opportunities

The time that you have left on campus is important to apply your experience abroad. You can find this by getting involved with campus offices such as UROP, Career Services, the Bennion Center, becoming a Learning Abroad Peer Advisor, or completing the Global U Program. There are various opportunities off campus as well such as getting involved with various international and local community engagement organizations. Continue to use your experience abroad in your academics, language, on-campus resources, community organizations, and daily life practices. This will help ensure that your time abroad is a lifelong experience.

Remember to step out of your comfort zone and view the world in new and different ways. There are many ways to experience human culture and to understand those from another culture. The following quote exemplifies the bigger picture of how you apply your experience abroad can have a larger impact not only for you but others in the world.

“The essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy—the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something we have failed to see, or may see it more accurately. The simple purpose of the exchange program...is to erode the culturally rooted mistrust that sets nations against one another. The exchange program is not a panacea but an avenue of hope....”

–William J. Fulbright, from The Price of Empire

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“Congratulations!

Today is your day.

You’re off to Great Places!

You’re off and away!”

— Dr. Seuss, Oh, The Places You’ll Go!

