# **WHY STUDY ABROAD**

*Career Benefits*

Study abroad experiences will change your life by opening doors for your future career. Our future leaders must obtain the skills necessary to succeed in a worldly workforce in today's diverse society. Employers intentionally seek out individuals who have had study abroad opportunities that expose them to new environments and situations that allow the student to grow personally and academically. Study abroad experiences provide students with a unique skill set that employers love.

Studying abroad develops skills that all employers value. According to an IIE report ([Gaining-an-Employment-Edge-The-Impact-of-Study-Abroad.pdf (iie.org)](https://www.iie.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Gaining-an-Employment-Edge-The-Impact-of-Study-Abroad.pdf), pg. 5-6), studying abroad has an overall positive impact on the development of a wide range of 21st-century job skills including “intercultural skills, curiosity, flexibility, adaptability, confidence, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, communication, problem-solving, language, tolerance for ambiguity, and course or major-related knowledge.” An academic advisor may know this.

Studying abroad also expands career possibilities. The skills gained through studying abroad have a long-term impact on career progression and promotion. According to IIE, “Longer periods of study abroad have a high impact on subsequent job offers and the development of most skills.” Short-term programs have been noted as the most effective at developing teamwork skills. Career placement advisors may know this.

Even if you don't intend to work for an international employer or are still determining your career goals, developing traits through a study abroad experience, such as resourcefulness, adaptability, resilience, and empathy, will give you an edge in any job market.

There are lots of reasons to study abroad. Hence, deciding to study abroad is a big step! Here is a list of the reasons to study abroad that show why an international experience is one of your life's best and most memorable experiences.

1. **See the World**: The most prominent reason you should consider a study abroad program is the opportunity to see the world.
2. **Education**: By enrolling in a study abroad program, you can see an aspect of your major that you may not see at home.
3. **Take in another culture**: When you study abroad, you are introduced to incredible foods, customs, traditions, and social atmospheres.
4. **Hone Your Language Skills:** Studying abroad allows you to immerse yourself entirely in a new language, and there is no better way to learn than to dive right in.
5. **Find New Interests**: Studying in a different country offers many new activities and interests you might have never discovered if you stayed home.
6. **Make Lifelong Friends**: Studying abroad allows you to get to know and create lasting relationships with students from the host country.
7. **Personal Development**: An additional benefit to studying abroad is the opportunity to discover yourself while understanding a different culture.
8. **Graduate School Admissions:** Students studying abroad are committed to their education. You might even discover an opportunity to pursue graduate education abroad. Graduate schools look for candidates who bring a unique aspect to their university.
9. **Career Opportunities:** You return with intercultural skills and a new perspective on culture and language after studying abroad--skills that are desirable to future employers.
10. **Life Experience**: For most students, study abroad during your college years may be the only opportunity to travel abroad for an extended time.

Visit these sites for more benefits to study abroad: <https://www.topuniversities.com/blog/25-reasons-study-abroad> and <https://www.internationalstudent.com/study-abroad/guide/ten-benefits-to-studying-abroad/>

The places you explore, the people you meet, and your experiences will prepare you to succeed in any workplace.

*Goals*

To make your international experience more meaningful, COE recommends thinking about your career and study abroad goals to help guide your selection of programs. Your TRIO staff members and campus study abroad staff are two great resources to tap into to assist with aligning your goals with available programs.

A group of people sitting at tables in a classroom

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Use the following template to examine your goals.

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| **Decision Factors** | Make a list of the most critical factors for you when choosing a program abroad and rank them in order of importance. This may include factors such as the length of the program course, time away, program location, cost, living arrangements, available coursework, and program types such as an internship, research, or service-learning |  |
| **Academic and Professional Learning** | What would you like to say that you learned academically or professionally when you return from your experience abroad? This may include improved language skills, understanding your major from a different perspective, fulfilling general education requirements, and/or increasing the knowledge base regarding the norms and cultures of another country. |  |

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| **Skills and Abilities** | What skills would you like to learn and strengthen during your experience abroad? This may include confidence, self-direction, problem-solving, critical thinking skills, intercultural communication, flexibility, working with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and adversity. |  |
| **Attitudes and Awareness** | Consider various perspectives and examine how you wish to stretch your thinking to grow personally, academically, and professionally during your experience abroad. This may include awareness of global issues, the ability to examine competing perspectives diplomatically, or even an appreciation of differences. |  |

Once your study abroad goals are determined, work with your TRIO staff member and/or campus study abroad staff to select the experience that would provide you with the opportunity that aligns best with your goals.