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Welcome Home!

Purpose of This Handbook

Welcome back to Minnesota! We hope you had a wonderful experience studying and living in another country. How is it to be back? Are you finding that coming home is more difficult than you anticipated or have you made the transition back with ease? Many students find that while it’s great to reunite with loved ones and hang out in all the old comfortable places, they’re still feeling a little off-center or out of place. It could be that you’re finding your friends and family can’t relate to your experience abroad, or perhaps it’s difficult to be back in a US classroom. No doubt your campus may seem boring after the excitement or novelty of Cape Town, Quito, or London. These feelings are quite normal. Re-entering your home culture can be just as difficult as adjusting to your host culture when you went abroad and for some it may be even more challenging.

Even if you aren’t feeling reverse culture shock, you still may be trying to figure out how to incorporate everything you’ve learned abroad into your life here. This handbook is designed to help you readapt to life in the United States and at the University of Minnesota. In addition, we encourage you to talk to the Learning Abroad Center staff about any of the topics discussed in this handbook. Read on for information on everything from surviving the perils of re-entry “shock” to working abroad and preparing your résumé for the future. It may be helpful for you to categorize your re-entry needs. The topics that will be discussed in this handbook fit into the following “re-entry topic areas:”

• Personal Aspects
• Career Development
• Academic Aspects

We hope this guide gives you some ideas for successfully transitioning back into life at the UofM, as well as continuing your international learning through activities, education, and sojourns in the US and abroad.

Personal Needs

Oh. the Joys of Coming Home

“Reverse Culture Shock”

You’ve had a wonderful experience overseas and you’re excited about sharing your experiences with others. You’ve gained useful skills and enhanced qualities that you probably never knew you had. With all transitions, however, there are highs, lows, and a need to take time to process how the “new you” will fit in back home and how the experience abroad has affected your future plans. The unsettled feeling that can accompany a return from abroad is what some refer to as “reverse culture shock,” which is a very common reaction for students coming home from studying abroad. Reactions can range from feeling frustrated that nobody understands how you’ve changed to panicked that you will lose part of the identity you gained abroad. Your own reactions to reintegrating to life in the US may vary from your friends’. Here are the top immediate re-entry challenges for students and recommendations on how to overcome them:

• Boredom—Upon return, life back in the US can seem very dull compared to your experiences abroad. It is your responsibility to overcome such negative reactions by finding ways to explore home and appreciate your own culture.

• “No one wants to hear”—You may find that no one will be as interested in hearing about your adventures and triumphs as you will be in sharing those experiences. This is not a rejection of you or your achievements, but simply the fact that since they have heard the highlights, any further interest on your audience’s part is probably unlikely. Be realistic in your expectations of how fascinating your journey is for everyone else. Be brief. Find a confidant.

• You can’t explain—It will be a little difficult to coherently relay all the sights, feelings, and experiences you had while abroad, in particular to those who don’t have similar frames of reference or travel backgrounds. Keep in mind that you may not be able to make them completely understand.

• Reverse homesickness—Just as you missed home upon your arrival overseas, it is natural to experience some reverse homesickness for the people, places, and things that you grew accustomed to abroad. To some extent, you can reduce this by keeping in touch with those you met while abroad and accepting that this is a natural result of study abroad for the majority of students.

• Relationships have changed—You may notice that relationships with some friends and family have changed. Just as you have altered some of your ideas and attitudes while abroad, the people at home are likely to have experienced some changes. The best preparation is flexibility, openness, minimal preconceptions, and tempered optimism.
• People see “wrong” changes—Sometimes people may concentrate on small alterations in your behavior or ideas and seem threatened or upset by them. Others may ascribe “bad” traits to the influence of your time abroad. To avoid or minimize them, monitor yourself and be aware of the reactions of those around you, especially in the first few weeks following your return.

• People misunderstand—Some people may misinterpret your words or actions in such a way that communication is difficult. For example, you may have new clothing styles or forms of verbal and non-verbal communications you acquired abroad. Be aware of how you may look to others and how your behavior is likely to be interpreted.

• Feelings of alienation—Sometimes the reality of being back “home” is not as natural or enjoyable as the place you had constructed in your mind. Many returnees develop “critical eyes,” a tendency to see faults in the society you never noticed before, which may lead to feelings of alienation. Mental comparisons are fine, but keep them to yourself until you regain both your cultural balance and a balanced perspective.

• Inability to apply new knowledge and skills—Many returnees are frustrated by the lack of opportunity to apply newly gained social, technical, linguistic, and practical coping skills that appear to be unnecessary or irrelevant at home. To avoid ongoing frustration, adjust to reality as necessary, change what is possible, be creative, be patient, and above all, use the cross-cultural adjustment skills you acquired abroad to assist you in your own re-entry.

• Loss or compartmentalization of experience (or “shoeboxing”)—Being home, coupled with the pressures of job, family, and friends, often combine to make returnees worried that somehow they will “lose” the experience. Many fear that it will somehow become compartmentalized like souvenirs or photo albums kept in a box and only occasionally taken out and looked at. To combat this, maintain your contacts abroad, seek out and talk to people who have had similar experiences to yours, practice your cross-cultural skills, and continue language learning.

Source: Bruce LaBrack, “What’s Up With Culture?”

According to professionals in the field of international education, 85% of people returning home have some kind of re-entry experience, and of those, 15% have more serious difficulties adapting to their return. If you’re having difficulty with your return, think back to the adjustments you made to succeed abroad. These same skills can help you in coming home. You probably experienced a “W”-curve of cultural adjustment both during your arrival and time abroad. The diagram below indicates the various curves of adjustment and culture shock students experience.

The same pattern applies to re-entry. Your coping skills and strategies that were successful overseas will be just as helpful in making the return home: Get involved, identify a support group of other learning abroad students, suspend judgment of others, keep a journal of your observations, and don’t forget to keep your sense of humor. If you are experiencing major difficulty with re-entry, however, it may be good to seek out professional help. Information
for counseling services can be found through University Counseling and Consulting Services: uccs.umn.edu.

Remember that “having been the fish out of water” and experiencing a different environment, it is natural that you may have a different view of the US now that you have something to compare it to.

It is important to understand that each culture and country has its own systems of functioning based on cultural values, geographic settings, and historical consequences that have been influences for generations and centuries. You may appreciate certain aspects of your host culture but dislike others. The same is most likely true of your perspective of the US system now that you have returned. After having been away, you may find things you like and others that you don’t. The goal is to continue the learning, since there are thousands of cultures/sub-cultures in the world and the US to learn from.

Coping, Adjusting, & Getting Involved

Many of the feelings you may experience stem from the change you have undergone and the ambiguity about how the new you fits into your old life. First of all, it is important to remember that change is a positive thing. You have new ideas and insights giving you a better sense of yourself. The trick is to figure out how to incorporate your new perspectives into your life at the University of Minnesota. First, don’t consider learning abroad a standalone experience; instead, look at it as the beginning of a lifetime of international experiences. Second, find ways to continue pursuing newfound interests. Make the most of the resources that exist for you on your home campus and in your local community. Here are a few ideas:

• Check out various resources for returned students through the Learning Abroad Center (LAC) on the “After You’re Back” section of the website. Examples include working in the LAC, becoming a Global Ambassador, sharing your story, conducting class visits, and helping with pre-departure orientations. Check out our website for more details: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/process/reentry.

• Take a language class to maintain your language proficiency or ask other faculty with foreign language skills if you can conduct your research and write your papers in a foreign language. Look into courses on campus pertaining to the region in which you studied.

• Be a tandem language partner: languagecenter.cla.umn.edu/tandem

• Attend international lecture series programs and other presentations on international affairs.

• Volunteer to lead conversation groups through your campus Intensive English Program for members of the campus and community who speak English as a second language.

• Host an international dinner party.

• Submit photos to the Learning Abroad Photo Contest (see details presented later in this handbook).

• Submit your original writing from abroad to be published in your campus or community newspapers or national magazines.

• Go to your campus or community library and read newspapers in the language of your host country.

• Join a student group with an international focus (e.g., Small World Coffee Hour, Culture Corps). See sua.umn.edu/groups/directory for a list of student organizations.

• Get involved in your community—there are many multicultural groups to be a part of. Visit the Community Service-Learning Center website: servicelearning.umn.edu.

• Visit the CLA Career Services and/or the Community Service-Learning Center to talk about new career interests as a result of your international experience: clacareer.umn.edu and servicelearning.umn.edu

• Check out foreign films from your campus or community library or watch the ones showing on your campus.

• Visit the “What’s up with Culture” website and take some of the reflection and skills assessment inventories. Visit www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/index.htm.

• Engage in conversation and dialogue with others about your experience. Correspond with friends and family from your host country.

• Attend a “Market Your International Experience Workshop” through the LAC.

• Stop by to talk with the LAC advisers about your experience. We love to hear about your experiences and see your photos.

Spain Semester Abroad

“The one thing that struck me was how you were expected to sum up your entire experience in two sentences or less. Even close friends who have not traveled abroad would move on to a new topic right away, one that they could understand. After a while, I often found myself saying ‘It was fun,’ without expanding. It is important to seek out others who have traveled and can relate, because they will be the ones who will love to hear your stories. It almost becomes an exclusive clique where you can feel comfortable sharing stories.”
• Attend the Minnesota statewide re-entry conference in the fall.
• Begin to explore options to go abroad again, either through teaching, volunteering, interning, or working abroad. Visit the LAC website at umabroad.umn.edu/programs.
• Meet with your career adviser to highlight your experience on your résumé.

Share Your Story
As a learning abroad returnee, there are many ways to share your experiences with others. Publishing them is not only beneficial for the reader, but a great experience for you and your résumé! Keep in mind that some organizations and publishers pay for submissions, while others do not. There are also a variety of photos and writing contests that offer prizes. The following information is taken from the websites of the organizations listed below.

Magazines and Online Publications
• **Glimpse Magazine** looks for correspondents. Its focus is to provide readers with in-depth insights into the daily cultural, political, and social realities of life abroad. You do not have to consider yourself a writer to contribute to Glimpse Magazine. Approximately one quarter of Glimpse articles are republished in major newspapers and magazines. Visit glimpse.org for more information.
• **Journeywoman.com Travel Resource Website** seeks to inspire females to travel safely and well and to connect women travelers worldwide. It publishes female-centered travel experience articles. Each published article becomes eligible for their Annual Journeywoman Travel Writing Competition. Visit journeywoman.com/writers_guidelines.html for more information.
• **Transitions Abroad** is a magazine for travelers, especially those seeking to extend their time abroad through work, study, and/or finding the best bargains. Its purpose is to provide readers with the practical information and ideas they need to make their own plans. Readers are most interested in learning about the culture by meeting the people and value for money. Visit transitionsabroad.com.
• **Travelmag** is an online travel publication based in the UK. It looks for tales of travel well beyond the guidebook routes, illuminating little-known corners of the globe and, occasionally, revealing a bit about themselves as well. Sometimes their writers are experienced journalists, others are starting out travel writing, learning the craft, and looking for markets for their travel stories. Visit travelmag.co.uk for more information.
• **Urban Lowdown** is part travel guidebook, part travel journal. Urbanlowdown focuses on the perspectives and experiences of student correspondents living around the globe. Visit urbanlowdown.com/correspondent.php.

Learning Abroad-Related Publications & Contests
• **American Institute For Foreign Study (AIFS):** If you studied abroad through AIFS, you can get your photo published in their catalog. Submit your photo to their “Capture the Culture” photo contest. Visit aifsabroad.com/alumni/contests.asp for more information.
• **GlobaLinks:** If you studied abroad through GlobaLinks, you can enter their annual photo contest. Visit globalinksabroad.org/for_alumni/share_your_experience/photo_contest for more information.
• **IES:** If you studied abroad through IES, you can enter their photo contest at iesabroad.org/study-abroad/news/enter-ies-abroad-photo-contest-today.
• **IFSA Butler:** If you studied abroad through IFSA-Butler, join their alumni network or submit a photo for their photo contest. Visit ifsa-butler.org.
• **National Geographic Magazine** holds a national photo contest. Visit their website ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/photo-contest for more information.

Local Newspapers
Write up your stories and submit them to local papers.
• **Minneapolis Star Tribune:** startribune.com
• **The Minnesota Daily:** mndaily.com
• **St. Paul Pioneer Press:** twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress

Academic Needs
Many students become busy enrolling in new classes, fulfilling graduation requirements, and re-adjusting back to the academic climate on their home campus. While these are all important aspects of the re-entry experience as they pertain to academics, make sure to verify that your transcript has been received by the Learning Abroad Center. You must follow up with your advisers to apply your learning abroad coursework to degree requirements. Be sure that you have the appropriate approvals from faculty and/or advisors. Talk to your advisor(s) about any change in degree plans that may have resulted from the experience abroad. REMEMBER: Be careful not to put off verifying that your credits have transferred or have been approved.
Incorporating Learning Abroad into Your Career Plan

With all you’ve experienced and learned, it wouldn’t be surprising to find your goals have shifted, expanded, or completely changed. Perhaps you want to continue to travel, or perhaps you’ve discovered a passion for French literature and want to change your major. Your thoughts of an ideal job may be different. Take some time to think seriously about what you want and where you see yourself in the future. While you shouldn’t feel too much pressure to plan your entire life at this time, at least make plans for the coming year. Deadlines for entry exams like the MCAT (for medical school), LSAT (for law school), GMAT (for business school), and GRE (for general graduate programs), as well as scholarships, fellowships, and graduate school applications can come quickly. The average job/internship search is six months. Start with your career counselor in your college. The following are suggestions on how to highlight your experience on your resume and cover letter.

Learning Abroad & Your Cover Letter & Résumé

Remember to include your study abroad experience on your résumé and cover letter, since it may appeal to potential employers and graduate schools. Think about the skills you gained and what you learned while abroad. Did you become proficient in a language? Did you gain research experience while conducting an independent study project? Have you become well versed in some aspect of your host country’s culture? Remember that you must make the connection to the actual skills you gained through the experience you had—it won’t always be obvious to an employer.

So, how do you get these skills across on a résumé and cover letter? See example cover letter and résumé examples at the end of this handbook.

First, address the specific job you hope to acquire in your cover letter. These questions can help you focus:

- How does your experience relate to your field?
- What are the transferable skills?
- How might your international experience uniquely benefit a professional in that field?

Second, consider listing learning abroad twice—under both education and experience. (See below for examples.)

**EXAMPLE 1:** You can include your learning abroad experience as part of your education including those skills relevant to your academic experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>University of Minnesota, College of Design: Minneapolis, MN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor of Science, Graphic Design Minor, Mass Communication (advertising emphasis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GPA, 3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L’Accademia Italiana: Florence, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gained an international perspective in design field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Completed coursework in photography, drawing, and Italian language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLE 2:** You can include your learning abroad experience as part of your related experience including those skills gained through your time abroad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Night Manager, Rainbow Foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minneapolis, MN (2014–2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Managed 5 employees through assigning workstations, supervising performance and assuming responsibility for the restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Responsible for making nightly cash deposit of up to $5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Oversaw nightly closing procedures and preparation for following day’s opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Abroad participant: Study &amp; Intern in Toledo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toledo, Spain (1/2015–6/2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learned to establish rapport quickly with individuals in an unfamiliar environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrated willingness to take risks through enrollment in Spanish-speaking curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Successfully completed independent research project despite linguistic and cultural barriers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wondering what other skills students gain through studying abroad? Some other possible outcomes may include:

**Skills**
- Establish rapport quickly
- Function with a high level of ambiguity
- Achieve goals despite obstacles
- Take initiative and risks
- Manage time well
- Accept responsibility
- Communicate well
- Learn quickly
- Handle difficult situations
- Handle stress
- Adapt to new environments
- Learn through listening and observing
- Speak and understand a second language
- Understand global economic and political issues
- Maintain an open mind and accept others
- Solve problems and manage crises effectively

**Qualities**
- Self-reliance
- High energy level/enthusiasm
- Appreciation of diversity
- Perseverance
- Flexibility
- Tolerance/openmindedness
- Assertiveness
- Inquisitiveness
- Self-confidence
- Self-knowledge
- Independence
- Enhanced cultural awareness and sensitivity to customs and cultural differences
- Patience

**Incorporating International Experience in Interviews**

**Learning Abroad & the Interview**
We encourage you to use the interview to explain or expand upon any skills and experiences you gained while abroad. Many employers may overlook your learning abroad experience and have a preconceived notion of learning abroad experiences. A common misconception is that learning abroad is often a time in which the student spent overseas socializing. It is up to you to effectively communicate the value of and skills that you acquired while abroad and how this will benefit their organization.

Be prepared to share stories from your time abroad that portray the skills and proficiencies required of the job.

**Behavioral Interviews Defined**
Job interviews occur in a variety of formats and styles. In behavior-based interviews, employers ask questions that force applicants to describe specific situations where they have utilized skills required in the position for which they are applying. The questions typically begin with phrases such as “Tell me about a time when...” or “Describe a situation in which you...”

Behavioral questions are extremely popular because employers believe past behavior is the best predictor of future performance. If a candidate can successfully describe how they utilized a particular skill in the past, chances are that s/he will do so in the future. This is your opportunity to illustrate the value of your international experiences in an interview.

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**MSID Kenya Semester Abroad**

“I am still processing my experience and will for a lifetime. My life has changed in how I examine my own culture and country and the historical and geographical influences each place in this world has on life in every corner of this earth.”
Answering Behavioral Questions

Effectively answering behavior-based interview questions requires a structured procedure and a lot of practice. It is critical to use a specific example when answering these questions. Examples will ideally come from current or previous employment, internships, research projects, volunteer activities, class projects, organization involvement, or leisure activities. Successful answers require two components:

- Articulating specific examples that best illustrate what you can do for an employer.
- A comprehensive answer including four components known as the “S.T.A.R.” technique:
  - **Situation**: What was the setting or situation of this example?
  - **Task**: What specific task or problem had to be addressed?
  - **Action**: What specific skills/tools did you use to address the above task?
  - **Result**: What was the result of your behavior?

*Action is where most of your time should be spent in your answer because it is the area where you are able to showcase your skills. Use skill words in your answer.*

Sample Question/Answer

**Question**: Tell me about an accomplishment that has given you tremendous satisfaction.

**Answer**: While studying abroad in Australia, I took a course called “Outback Safety and Survival.” (Situation) The final test for the course required me and my 20 classmates to put our course knowledge to use by actually living in the outback for several days. (Task) To successfully accomplish this task, I first had to study exceptionally hard for the course and gain a lot of knowledge in a short period of time. In preparation for the trip, I had to critically analyze what supplies I would take and consider the value of the item versus the additional weight this would require me to carry. Once we were dropped off in the outback, my teammates and I had to collaborate to create shelters and navigate difficult terrain. As the only person from outside of the country, I also had to adapt to different cultural norms and adjust my communication style to that of my teammates. On several instances I faced unexpected obstacles and had to quickly problem-solve the situation. To complete the task required extensive motivation, patience, and drive. (Action) As a result of my dedication and skills, I was one of 6 students who did not quit before the allotted days were up. (Result)

Anticipating questions as well as preparing and practicing responses is critical.

View additional sample interview questions in the back of this handbook.

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Personal Branding

When it comes to personal branding, employers want to hire “the real you.” Have you ever asked yourself, “Who am I and how do others perceive me?” If not, these questions are what will help frame your personal brand. Similar to a product or service, each comes with a certain set of thoughts, assumptions, expectations, and/or images. What do you want others to assume, expect, or imagine when they see your picture and name or receive your resume? We all carry with us our own unique promise of value. The key is to sell your brand and employability to others.

In more than 30 years of research into leadership, Gallup found that top achievers have one thing in common: They build their academic and personal life on their talents. By applying their talents as a foundation for strength development, they achieve excellence, leveraging their strengths to manage weaknesses. According to Dr. John Maxwell, “The secret of successful people lies in their ability to discover their strengths and to organize their life so that these strengths can be applied.” Have you ever Googled yourself? If yes, what do you see? Does it represent your brand or the type of perception you want others to have of you? Your online presence is key and is the best, easiest, and fastest way to promote your personal brand (e.g. social media). Resources such as LinkedIn, Twitter, electronic portfolios, blogging, and personal websites are avenues you can use to promote your brand.

**Why Build a Personal Brand?**

- Perception is reality: How others perceive you online, in person, or elsewhere is their reality. The good news is that you have some control over it.
- What employers think of you is not as important as what you think of yourself. Your perception of your identity, skills, and achievements affects the types of jobs you look for and the way you connect with employers. Your talents, skills, knowledge, experience, and strengths all make up your brand.
- Developing a strong personal brand puts you in charge of leaving a footprint (how you want to be remembered), helps you establish credibility and visibility, provides you with a competitive edge (differentiating yourself from the competition), and allows you to find people and work environments that complement your strengths.
Use the steps below to begin the process of developing your personal brand, clarify “the real you,” and improve your job search strategy and marketability.

• Determine your values, strengths, passions, attributes, and skills.
• List relevant companies, volunteerism, recognition, awards, and certifications that distinguish you.
• List relevant projects and work experiences and their results.
• Complete the statement, “I really enjoy working in…” (List industries, team characteristics, etc.)
• Complete the statement, “I have focused in/on…” (List key skills, capabilities, and strengths.)
• Complete the statement, “I am interested in...” (benchmarking, increasing expertise, expanding your network, etc.)

Promoting Your Brand

• **Know your purpose:** What are you trying to achieve? This will help determine your approach.
• **Know your audience:** What is your niche? Are you targeting professionals, colleagues, potential customers, friends, or family?
• **Offline branding:** Does your branding (resumes, networking, business cards, informational interviews, etc.) effectively promote your brand?
• **Online branding:** Use these sites to develop your brand.
  - Google yourself—[google.com](http://google.com); Google Grader—[brand-yourself.com/features/google](http://brand-yourself.com/features/google);
  - Social Mention—[socialmention.com](http://socialmention.com);
  - Online Identity Calculator—[onlineidcalculator.com](http://onlineidcalculator.com);
  - Blogs (WordPress, Typepad); LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, etc.

Go Abroad Again

There are a variety of ways to go abroad again after you have graduated. Even on a tight budget, work, volunteer, internship, and teaching English abroad opportunities are readily available to you. The information below is intended to provide you with ideas to help you consider which option is best for you. For detailed information, attend a Work, Internship and Volunteer Abroad or Teach Abroad First Step Meeting. For UMTC students, visit the Learning Abroad Center website for more information on dates and times: [UMabroad.umn.edu](http://UMabroad.umn.edu).

Before researching any opportunity, consider the following:

• What do you hope to gain from the experience?
• Where do you prefer to go?
• Would you like to utilize any language skills? Are you proficient enough to work in that language?
• How long would you like to stay abroad?

• How important is it to be paid? Can you support yourself financially?
• How will the experience relate to longer-term academic or career goals?
• What type of working visa, if any, is required?

If you are interested in working, interning, or volunteering abroad, look into Goinglobal. Goinglobal provides country-specific and employment information. It is also a rich research resource as you investigate other career resources.

Learn more through GoldPASS: [goldpass.umn.edu](http://goldpass.umn.edu).

Short-Term Work Abroad

Short-term work abroad (less than one year; typically 4–12 months) usually involves working in an unskilled job, where you can earn enough to cover your food, lodging and daily living expenses. This type of job probably will not pay enough to cover air transportation, but it may help provide some extra money for travel after you leave your job. Short-term work experiences include positions such as “au pairs” (a person who does domestic work for a family, possibly taking care of children in exchange for room and board and a chance to learn the family’s language), farm workers, typists, waitpeople, and youth camp leaders. If you are a full-time student or a recent graduate, some of the easiest ways to secure legal employment overseas include the work abroad programs through the British Universities North American Club (BUNAC), USIT: Work and Travel Ireland, the CEI Work in France program, or Alliance Abroad’s work program.

Through BUNAC ([bunac.org](http://bunac.org)) and USIT: Work and Travel Ireland ([usit.ie/study-in-ireland/work-and-travel-ireland](http://usit.ie/study-in-ireland/work-and-travel-ireland)), you can cut through some red tape and obtain documentation that allows you to work from three months to one year in another country. No special skills are required, but you must speak the language of the country (only applicable to French Canada). BUNAC does not find employment or housing for you but offers in-country support and resources to help you with your search. If you’re resourceful and willing to be flexible in the type of job, you should be able to find a position within a week or two, depending on the location and time of the year.
Internships Abroad
Internships abroad are a good way to build on the skills and knowledge you have already developed while gaining professional experience and networking within your field of interest. You can intern abroad as an undergraduate or after you graduate. Both options can help you gain practical experience, explore new career options, and strengthen your resume. You can participate in an internship as part of a study program or find a position through a placement provider such as CDS International or Cross-Cultural Solutions. Many other internship programs and placement organizations can be found on our website: UMabroad.umn.edu/programs. Most internships are unpaid, although more technical internships may be compensated. Whether your internship is paid or not, you will gain invaluable experience in your field and learn about another culture from a unique perspective.

Volunteer Abroad
Restoration projects, literacy campaigns, and teaching are just a few examples of the many volunteer programs abroad. Some programs charge a fee and provide services such as insurance coverage, meals and even housing. Some provide free room and board in exchange for work. Volunteer work opportunities range from a few weeks to two or three years. If you’re interested in development work, want to meet other foreigners and host nationals, and don’t mind rudimentary living conditions, consider volunteering.

Teaching English Abroad
There are many opportunities to teach English abroad through established programs. Most programs prefer a commitment of one academic year, though some offer summer or semester possibilities. In general, a bachelor’s degree is required, although in most cases you do not need to be an English major. Organizations are more interested in your ability to speak native and fluent English. Volunteer and paid teaching opportunities can be found throughout the world. See UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/wiv/teach.php for more information.

It’s important to remember you have gained valuable skills through learning abroad that will be useful regardless of what you do next. Visit your campus learning abroad office or career center for additional assistance.

Learning Abroad Fair Exhibitors
The Learning Abroad Fair occurs every fall semester. Different organizations that may be of interest to you such as CIEE, which has work abroad programs, attend the fair. Other organizations such as the Learning Abroad Center have information on working, interning, or volunteering abroad as well as graduate programs abroad. Each year the organizations represented change but below we listed organizations that tend to come each year. Look for signs advertising the Fair or check our website.

Arcadia University: The College of Global Studies
• Offers opportunities to attend graduate school abroad
• Phone: 1.866.927.2234
• Website: arcadia.edu/abroad/index.html

Globalinks
• Offers opportunities to attend graduate school in Australia and New Zealand
• Phone: 800.980.0033
• Website: globalinksabroad.org/study-abroad/degrees-abroad/

CIEE
• Offers opportunities to teach in Chile, China, Dominican Republic, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, and Vietnam.
• Phone: 800.40.STUDY; 800.407.8839
• Website: ciee.org/teach

Global Volunteers
• International volunteer opportunities in 20 countries around the world including China, Costa Rica, India, Peru, Poland, South Africa, and Tanzania.
• Website: globalvolunteers.org

Peace Corps
• Government program for two-year, international volunteer opportunities
• Phone: 612.626.5311
• Website: peacecorps.gov

Going to Graduate School
Enhancing your Newfound Skills: Graduate School—At Home or Abroad?
Is the continuation of your academic career your next step? If you’re thinking about going to graduate school, your first two steps should be to talk to your academic advisor and pay a visit to your campus career center. They will help you to learn how to identify programs that match your interests and goals and get you started in the application process.
The Learning Abroad Center has resources for graduate programs abroad in the Resource Center and online: umabroad.umn.edu/students/choosingprogram/graduateprofessional.

If you’re thinking about going to graduate school abroad, there are several things to consider in the application process. First of all, pinpoint what you want to study. Next, determine which schools offer the best programs. (This is where your faculty advisor may be of particular assistance.) How will you finance your studies? US Federal Aid and loans may not be available for all programs overseas. Whatever you decide, you’ll first have to take the entry exams, which are offered every few months. These tests may not be required by schools overseas, but it is still a good idea to take them now while your schooling is fresh, just in case your plans change to include a graduate program in the US. To find out when your particular test is being offered, stop by your campus career center. Also, the Princeton Review keeps an excellent website with information on graduate school exams: princetonreview.com.

Study, work, internships, or research abroad are commonly integrated into US-based graduate degree programs, and students often use the opportunity to return to their learning abroad country or explore a different one. We recommend planning your international experience early on in your graduate degree program to make sure that the work you do overseas relates directly to your degree requirements. Consult our website for a list of available opportunities. There is no cookie-cutter approach to graduate learning abroad and you are encouraged to talk with your academic advisers, peers, professors, the graduate program that you are considering, and Learning Abroad Center staff to determine the right opportunity for you.

Information on International-Related Graduate Study Programs in the US

Returned learning abroad students are often interested in pursuing graduate work in international education or comparative international education. The following lists were compiled from a listserv discussion of international education professionals. These lists are not exhaustive, and inclusion does not imply endorsement.

International Education

The following schools offer degrees in international education or a similar field:

- Boston University
- Florida State University
- George Washington University (Washington, DC)
- Harvard University
- Lesley University (Massachusetts)
- New York University
- School for International Training (Vermont)
- University of the Pacific (in collaboration with Intercultural Communication Institute in Portland, Oregon)
- University of San Francisco

Comparative International Education or International Educational Development

The following schools offer degrees in comparative international education:

- American University (Washington, DC)
- Claremont Graduate University (California)
- Columbia University (New York)
- Florida International University
- George Washington University (Washington, DC)
- Harvard University
- Indiana University Bloomington
- Iowa State University of Science and Technology
- Loyola University Chicago (Illinois)
- The Pennsylvania State University
- Stanford University
- State University of New York at Buffalo
- University of California Los Angeles
- University of Florida
- University of Maryland
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Minnesota in Minneapolis
- University of Pittsburgh

"For me, the first time that I returned to the States, the culture shock was much stronger than what I felt while I was living abroad. That exhilarating feeling of being in a new place, everything and everyone is different, often picturesque, is a similar feeling upon return, but it isn’t as exhilarating, it seems more exclusionary. I was hoping to return home, where everything was familiar, comfortable, I could communicate easily, but instead I felt like everything was strange and I was an outsider in my own home. The billboards, the advertisements, the way people ride the buses was all very alienating. This return time is important to reflect on our own cultural norms that are taken for granted because, although we knew other ways existed, we never experienced them and we never had to normalize them in our daily lives."
Resources for International Study and Fellowships

Scholarships

Fulbright Scholarship
- For study, research, or teaching abroad
- Applications are to one specific country
- If more than one semester of study in a country, don’t apply to that country
- Funds awarded
- Fulbright Program Adviser, Grad. School Fellowship Office, 314 Johnston Hall, 612.625.7579

Marshall Scholarship
- Marshall Scholarships finance young Americans of high ability to study for a degree in the United Kingdom
- For study at any UK university, including the “Big Three”
- Need a 3.7 GPA minimum to apply

The George J. Mitchell Scholarship
- Scholarship for study in Ireland
- Not for “Irish Studies”
- Competitive modeled as the “Marshall Scholarship to Ireland”

Rhodes Scholarship
- For study at Oxford University, UK
- Must have impressive grades and leadership experience

Thomas J. Watson Fellowship
- A one-year grant for travel and study outside the US
- Must be a student at one of the 50 participating institutions
- Free-formed, non-study proposals

David L. Boren Scholarship
- National Security Education Program (NSEP)
  David L. Boren Undergraduate Scholarships
- Offers undergraduates the resources to study the language and culture of a non-Western country
- Intern for the federal department of your choice

Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (McNair Scholars Program)
- Created to increase educational opportunities to students who are from low-income, first-generation families, and/or those who are from ethnic backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in graduate education.
  It is funded through the Department of Education.
- Apply through home college or university

Additional Graduate Programs and Search Engines
- Association of Professional Schools in International Affairs: apsia.org
- GradSchools.com: gradschools.com or gradschools.com/program-types/graduate-schools-by-country
Suggested Reading

Suggested Reading on Culture & Cultural Adjustment

Adapted from Life After Your Internship from the IE3 Global Internships Program.


University of the Pacific. (2003). What’s Up With Culture? Website: www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/index.htm

Student Address

Date

Ms./Mr. Employer Name
630 W. Colorado Boulevard
Suite 461
Denver, CO 80024

Dear Ms. Employer:

Professor Name, professor in the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, encouraged me to contact you concerning an internship with one of your companies for the summer of 2017. One such company, Systoflex, interests me in particular. Upon researching it, I was especially impressed with the variety of markets this company served while maintaining an increasing stock value over the past five months.

In May, I will complete my junior year at the University of Minnesota in the Computer Information Systems program. I currently hold a broad understanding of business and the computer applications needed to support business activities. My specific field of interest lies in business communication tools such as internal networking and database tracking systems. My experience studying abroad in Germany for a semester provided me with a cross-cultural perspective of information systems. My subject knowledge as well as my ability to adapt to changing environments will ensure a smooth transition from the classroom to the business environment.

In the past I have taken part in many group projects. Some entailed designing a tracking system for a university tool crib and designing a database tracking system for a local land trust company. Throughout these tasks, I increased my teamwork, leadership, and communication skills. I am a self-motivated, autonomous worker, and I am confident that I can adapt to any situation and provide value to your company.

Thank you for reviewing my resume and considering me for this internship. I look forward to hearing from you; you can reach me at 970.398.8945 or ojaeger@hooly.colostate.edu.

Sincerely,

Student Name

Enclosure
Dear Ms. Employer:

One of your recently hired employees, Person Name, informed me of possible job openings in mechanical engineering at your company. I am very interested and would appreciate your consideration as a candidate for the position of development engineer.

I first learned of Sturman in a machine dynamics class taught by Dr. Bryan Wilson. The technology involved was interesting to me because of my automobile experience, and during the last two years of FSAE, I performed a considerable amount of work on our fuel injection system.

As you will note from the enclosed resume, I have many of the attributes you are seeking for this position:

1. B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Minnesota
2. Internship with manufacturing experience at PCC Composites
3. Internship with integration experience at CTI
4. Team leadership experience at Formula SAE
5. Cross-cultural experience from studying in Austria for one semester

During my three years of working at PCC Composites, I gained a broad understanding of manufacturing. I witnessed how parts were taken from engineering prints through prototyping and finally to a full production run. I performed multiple research projects that eventually were put into production. My learning abroad experience taught me to view problems from a culturally different perspective. Additionally, I am able to adapt to changing environments with ease and work with people of diverse backgrounds.

I would love the opportunity to discuss this position with you during an interview. I can be reached at 970.493.9389. I will contact your office in the next ten days to see if you would like any further information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Student Name
March 28, 2017

General Mills, Inc.
P.O. Box 9452
Minneapolis, MN 55440

Dear Human Resources Representative,

I was excited to find your internship posting for Retail Food Sales Representative Intern on the University of Minnesota’s job postings website, GoldPASS. The combination of my food and business management education, sales experience, and international studies have prepared me for the internship at General Mills.

In December I will be graduating with my Bachelor of Science in Agricultural, Food, and Business Management degree. My class work included courses in food marketing and retailing, finance, and food science. Additionally, we conducted group project analysis with General Mills products as the topic.

During my sales internship with Simon Delivers, I was able to expand my knowledge of food retailing and enhance my sales skills. I assisted the sales staff by organizing and prioritizing 2,000 local area prospects increasing the impact of the sales team. I attended weekly meetings and improved my understanding of the decisions companies make and the reasons why they make those decisions in a growing domestic market.

Additionally, while studying abroad in England at the London School of Economics, I gained a global perspective on business topics related to marketing and finance. The experiences both in and outside of the class help illustrate the importance of cultural competency and knowledge when working with diverse populations. Since General Mills is represented worldwide, my increased awareness and ability to analyze cultures and adapt to new situations will benefit me in this internship position.

I believe my interest and experiences qualify me for Retail Food Sales Representative Intern position. I will be contacting you in the next week to ensure that you have received my materials. Please call me at 952.333.2345 or email at ksmith@yahoo.com if you have any questions. I am available throughout most of the day and evenings.

Sincerely,

Karen Smith
KAREN SMITH
2353 Park Boulevard • Bloomington, Minnesota 55403
952.333.2345 • ksmith@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE
To obtain a sales position within the food retail industry utilizing my international, communications, and customer service experience.

EDUCATION
Bachelor of Science, Agricultural, Food, and Business Management
University of Minnesota, anticipated graduation Fall 2018
Major GPA 3.64, Overall GPA 3.23

London School of Economics—Semester Study Abroad Spring 2017
- Conducted extensive coursework in marketing and finance GPA 3.65
- Gained global perspective on business topics both in and outside the classroom

RELATED EXPERIENCE
Sales Intern, Simon Delivers May 2016–September 2016
St. Louis Park, Minnesota
- Supported sales staff by organizing an Excel database and prioritizing more than 2,000 prospects by ZIP code
- Accompanied staff on sales calls and independently conducted daily service calls
- Attended weekly sales meeting, gained understanding of market expansion strategies

Sponsorship Committee Chair, Collegiate Agri-Women Summer 2015
University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Coordinated sponsorship sales for annual fundraiser, raising $250,000
- Contacted corporate and individual sponsors to make in-person sales meetings
- Exceeded previous sponsorship levels by 10 percent

OTHER EXPERIENCE
Development Assistant, Office of Development September 2015–present
University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Support work of development staff through clerical duties and by maintaining pleasant rapport with donors on the phone and in person
- Gain understanding of strategies to develop strong relationships with prospects
- Design marketing tools including an invitation to promote a donor reception sent to more than 500 corporate partners including Cargill, Monsanto, and Syngenta Corporation

Guest Services Supervisor/Cashier, Target Stores October 2014–May 2015
Edina, Minnesota
- Provided excellent customer service, resolved customer complaints while maintaining a professional pleasant attitude
- Monitored and re-stocked merchandise using state-of-the-art inventory control system
- Trained more than 30 guest services staff and revised staff training manual to ensure outstanding employee job knowledge

- Received award for highest volume of sales during spring 2014

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES
George Wilson Scholarship Spring 2017
- Awarded to four students for outstanding leadership

Omicron Beta Fraternity September 2015–present
- Honorary applied economics fraternity
KRISTEN SAMPLE
1234 Main Street • Minneapolis, MN 55419 • 612.555.1234 • sampl001@umn.edu

OBJECTIVE
To acquire an advocate position in a local non-profit organization, which will utilize my international experience and communication skills.

EDUCATION
Bachelor of Arts Family Social Science
University of Minnesota–Twin Cities
GPA: 3.25

Study Abroad
Minnesota Studies in International Development, Nairobi, Kenya
Coursework included Introductory Swahili, International Development, and Analysis of Kenya

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE
AIDS Educator, January 2016–May 2016
Nairobi, Kenya
• Conducted presentations on preventing AIDS to more than 200 middle and high school children
• Facilitated small group discussions with women on culturally sensitive strategies for ensuring safe sexual behavior
• Created and administered evaluations to monitor program’s effectiveness at reaching documented goals

RELATED EXPERIENCE
Refugee and Immigrant Intern, January 2015–present
Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, Minneapolis, MN
• Conduct intake interviews with clients to gather information for staff to utilize when determining service for client
• Research human rights conditions in more 20 countries and provide this information to staff to better serve clients
• Write letters and implement large mailings to attorneys to generate professionals willing to offer pro bono services for the organization
• Assist in the planning and implementation of educational events and fundraisers for the organization, including volunteer coordination and marketing

Peer Advisor, September 2016–May 2017
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
• Counseled students one on one about their major and answered questions regarding careers
• Conducted hour-long resume workshops for 5–20 students to ensure proper understanding of how to effectively write resumes and cover letters
• Promoted office services through classroom visits and by attending campus activity fairs

ACTIVITIES
Family Social Science Roundtable, October 2014–present
• Serve as organization treasurer and manage organization budget
• Arrange guest speakers for organization meetings

Big Brothers/Big Sisters Volunteer, September 2015–September 2016
• Met twice monthly with a child in need of adult mentoring
• Assisted in training in five new adult volunteers
Objective
To obtain a marketing position which will utilize my customer relations and international experiences in a Fortune 500 company

Education

Bachelor of Arts, English
University of Minnesota–Twin Cities

Business Marketing Minor, Carlson School of Management

May 2017
Major GPA 3.64
Minor GPA 3.20

Professional Marketing Experience

3M, St. Paul, Minnesota
Marketing Intern
June 2016–August 2016

• Sold library security equipment to more than 2,000 clients throughout the United States needing to upgrade or acquire new security systems
• Assisted customers in assessing security needs and identifying appropriate equipment to meet their goals
• Wrote contracts to document price, delivery timeline, installation costs, and warranty terms
• Communicated with five other departments to place orders, coordinate delivery, and follow up on customer payments
• Collaborated with other sales employees to identify potential new clients and to brainstorm new ways to best serve and retain existing clients

Other Work Experience

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Library Assistant
August 2015–Present

• Process more than 500 new library materials and prepare them for circulation
• Assist faculty and students in finding appropriate books and periodicals
• Enter returned books into computer systems and re-shelve them for circulation

Study Abroad Experience

Queen Mary, University of London
Fall 2017
• Successfully completed coursework analyzing business and marketing strategies from a European perspective
• Volunteered 15 hours per week for a nonprofit organization

Scottish University, Edinburgh
Summer 2015
• Studied European Literature and Culture through intensive 8-week program
• Demonstrated leadership skills by volunteering to head a team of eight classmates
Sample Interview Questions

Sample Behavior-Based Questions

The following are examples of behavior-based interview questions that focus on a wide range of performance attributes that employers frequently try to assess during an interview.

In every response you should answer the following questions even if it is not asked directly by the employer:

- What was the **Situation** or setting?
- What specific **Task** or problem had to be addressed?
- What specific **Actions** did you take? *
- What was the **Result** or outcome? **

* Action is where most of your time should be spent in your answer because it is the area where you are able to showcase your skills and differentiate yourself from others. Use skill words in your answer.

** Applicants often forget to conclude with the results. This is your opportunity to tie your story together and shine on a light on your accomplishment. Don’t forget to share your results.

- Tell me about a time you used creativity to solve a problem.
- Explain the most difficult decision you have made in the last six months and your process for deciding.
- Describe your best example of taking the initiative to do something that needed to be done, even though it wasn’t your responsibility.
- Describe a situation in which you believe you were effective in achieving an aggressive goal.
- Tell me about the most significant project you have worked on in which it was crucial to keep track of details while still managing the “big picture.”
- Describe a time when you had success communicating your thoughts clearly to another person or group.
- Tell me a time when you voiced a concern or disagreement to a co-worker, supervisor, or professor.
- Tell me about a situation in which you had to lead several other people to achieve a goal.
- Describe one of your most stressful experiences and how you coped with the situation.
- Tell me about a time that you were effective in putting your technical expertise to use to solve a problem.
- Describe a recent group project you experienced when you peers were not pulling their weight.
- Tell me about a time when someone was critical of your work and how you dealt with the criticism.
- Give me a time when you were responsible for a project that didn’t go the way you expected. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you built strong relationships where none existed before.
- Describe a time when you were working with a team that needed to make a group decision, yet there was not agreement in the group.
- Tell me about a time when you faced an unexpected emergency at work.
“How to Find a Job in the Field of Learning Abroad” (I Want Your Job)

“I Want YOUR Job!”
– or –
How to Find a Job in the field of Learning Abroad

Adapted from Kathleen Barnebey, former NW Field Director Institute for Learning abroad at Butler University

First things first:
1. Learn abroad! More than once, in different countries, if possible.
2. Learn a second (or third) language.
3. Work as a peer advisor, work-study student, or intern in your school’s learning abroad or international programs office.
4. Consider your masters degree in a subject you are passionate about, but know that you don’t need to have an advanced degree in international education. Degrees in English, Business, etc. can also be tied to future goals in Learning Abroad. See the section of this handbook on graduate study for more information.
5. If possible, integrate an internship with the international programs office into your masters program. Many say a degree is nothing without experience.

Recommended software skills:
1. Learn all the Microsoft Office programs (especially PowerPoint).
2. Learn to do simple design and layout in a desktop publishing program.
3. Learn how to design and maintain a website.
4. Learn how to use a database program.

Reality check: if you want to work in learning abroad (besides having done all of the above), you need to:
1. Be willing to move to the job – great jobs are often in far away places.
2. Start at the bottom.
3. Not have dreams of becoming rich.
4. Be proactive and send in your résumé to organizations you think you’d like to work for (do your research first!) even if they haven’t posted a job – there’s lots of turnover in the field.

If you want to become a “Road Warrior” (e.g., traveling recruiter), optimally, you need to:
1. Love airports and being in airplanes.
2. Like to drive.
3. Like spending time alone.
4. Love staying in hotels.
5. Preferably, be single, and not be in a committed relationship.
6. Not be a pet owner.
7. Not have a garden or houseplants (unless someone else can take care of them for you).

What other types of jobs are available in learning abroad? Here are just a few examples:
1. Program coordinator/advisor/director
2. Overseas resident director
3. Webmaster
4. Database manager
5. Marketing or external relations manager/director
6. Academic director
7. Credit transfer evaluator
8. Budget manager/director

(In many smaller learning abroad offices, one person is often responsible for ALL of the above!)

Networking/job searching tips:
1. Get involved with NAFSA: Association of International Educators (for job directory, conferences, and general info about international education).
2. For job postings, sign up for Secuss-l by going to: www.secussl.info. Follow the directions to sign up for the listserv. Read all the information—there are Secuss-l “police” who make sure you’re using the listserv correctly!
4. Tell your learning abroad director or adviser that you’re interested in working in the field (learning abroad is a very well-connected field; many advisers know other learning abroad people all across the country and are familiar with many other learning abroad offices, organizations, and programs).