sai



BEYOND THE AWESOME

SO YOU HAVE RETURNED FROM STUDY ABROAD...NOW WHAT?

Like many study abroad students, you are likely feeling a lot of emotions about your journey coming to an end: from sadness to joy, from stress to an overall "now what" feeling. Do not worry! Adjusting to life back home can be difficult... that is why we created this guide: to help you through it.

We believe a study abroad provider's job does not end once students return home. Here at SAI, we are committed to investing in each student's experience before, during, and after they study abroad. We hope this guide will help you use your study abroad experience to the fullest by reflecting and considering how you can now speak about your experience past the typical "it was awesome!"

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WHEN YOU GET BACK

Brooke-SAI Ambassador



When it comes to picking a study abroad program, many people have different wants and needs. Food, language, landscape and nightlife all can be factors when making a choice. The most important factors for me was that I was in a smaller, more intimate city, that I was able to learn a new language and I could meet and interact with the locals. With an open mind and open heart, I chose Sorrento, Italy and couldn't have been happier. Upon my return to the University of South Carolina I had an urge to get out and keep exploring like when I was abroad. So, I created a list of tips and suggestions of things to do to fill the wanderlust void.

VISITING FRIENDS:

Though smaller than most, my program consisted of people from all over the country. We all carried with us different social norms and different college experiences, but we all related through our excitement to travel and experience the world, and of course, our appetite. Once I returned home, I could not wait to go visit my friends in the cities that they call home! This leads me to my next tip, no matter how far, try and visit your friends! I recently went to visit a friend in Wisconsin and it was an awesome weekend filled with a lot of reminiscing.

KEEP TRAVELING:

As a senior in college, I am incredibly busy, but I still make sure that I find time to travel. Without having a weekend away every now and then, I go a bit insane. I need to have that time for new discoveries! Even if this means just going a few miles away, it's exciting to keep busy with going to new places.

DISCOVERING YOUR OWN CITY:

I learned fast and hard once I returned home, that jumping into my mundane routine was no longer going to be possible. I craved adventuring out of the normal places I would go to eat dinner or grab drinks with my friends. Possibly going to that museum in a city you live in that you haven't had the opportunity to do before, or visiting the park a little off the beaten path, anything can help make your everyday life in your home city a little more exciting.

EATING/COOKING:

Being a huge coffee fiend before study abroad, I wasn't really sure how I was going to make the transition to espresso and cappuccino. Though it was a struggle at first, I would say by about the 3rd week I had transitioned seamlessly. Now every now and then I find myself craving it over coffee and I recently found a place that reminds me of a European cafe and has the best cappuccino and pastries I have had since returning from Italy.

KEEPING UP WITH THE LANGUAGE:

This one is the hardest, but the most rewarding. Personally, I am not someone that has the mind to learn languages easily. I have a southern accent, I am lazy with my words, and between school and work I am usually not eager to work on keeping up with a language I am no longer using. BUT, it is worth it! Knowing that if (and when) I return to Italy I could hold a conversation with someone is incredibly rewarding. Helpful hint: use apps to remind you to practice every day. Duolingo is a great one!

PLANNING NEW ADVENTURES FOR THE FUTURE: Experience over tangible things has always been the way that I save my money.I'm not saying you have to go out and sell all of your clothes, but saving some extra money to go to a concert, visit that city you have always dreamed about, or planning a trip to return to your study abroad city is definitely worth its while. The summer before my junior year of college I completely funded my own trip to San Francisco and trust me, it is incredibly rewarding to be able to pay for these experiences yourself.



LEVERAGING YOUR STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

KELSIE STANLEY-SAI STAFF

During my first study abroad experience with SAI, I became enthralled with international education. Upon my first return, I took part in the SAI Ambassador program to promote international education at the University of South Carolina. While I was abroad for the second time, I applied for an internship in the SAI home office in Sebastopol, California and was awarded a paid internship during the following summer. I was then able to learn about study abroad from a program provider's standpoint and decided that I wanted to pursue a career in international education. My junior year, I participated in the SAI Ambassador program again while I applied for an internship in Italy and was awarded a Peer Leadership position for the University of South Carolina's Business in Turkey trip. That summer, I traveled throughout Eastern Europe before arriving in Italy and working as a marketing intern at Sant'Anna Institute. While I interned, I learned about international education from a foreign university's point of view and once again, was captivated. My final year of undergrad was spent working at the University of South Carolina's study abroad office promoting SAI and study abroad in general. This was another eye-opening experience working at a U.S. higher education institution's study abroad office. After that experience, I was certain that this was the field for me and am so thankful that SAI had an entry-level position open right after graduation. I am now working for the company that started

my love of international education and now every day of work is meaningful knowing that I am helping students start their journeys abroad and hopefully some of them fall in love with international education the way I did and pursue a career in it.



With the rapidly expanding global marketplace, employers are looking for candidates who have been exposed to and understand cross-cultural needs. When students return from abroad, it's time to start thinking of their expereience as value added to their professional portfolio. Even if the career they are pursuing isn't international

in theme or scope, they have gained skills that are applicable to any future professional situation. The next challenge is being able to communicate the skills and qualities they gained abroad and translate them to the workplace.

The exposure to new environments that study abroad students experience not only makes them more flexible to adapt to new surroundings and changing environments, but it also helps to develop knowledge, skills and abilities that are desirable in any professional setting. Employers are looking for people who can understand other points of view, think globally, problem-solve, think on their feet; people who can jump into new situations with initiative and willingness to learn; people with good communication, conflict-resolution and relationship-building skills. Some qualifications that are enhanced in most international experiences include: some level of foreign language proficiency, increased independence, cultural competency, and greater flexibility. Students also leave their foreign experience with increased confidence, independence and initiative while also being more aware of global, political, and economic issues. All of those are transferable skills. Thus, it is essential that students leverage their study abroad experience in their job search, especially in their resumes, cover letters, and interviews.





KELSIE'S TIPS

COVER LETTERS

- Discuss how your cultural competencies and other skills developed during study abroad and how they will benefit the employer.
- State that operating in a global arena, and having an international experience are key to working in today's global market.

RESUMES

- List the program in the education section of your resume.
- If you worked or interned in a team project during study abroad, you can list it in the Work/Professional Experience section of your resume.
- If your resume includes a section for skills, include skills that you aquired or improved while abroad.

INTERVIEWS

- Students can highlight a greater understanding of international market trends and global development opportunities.
- When answering behavioral questions like, "Tell me about a time you resolved a conflict with a coworker or a classmate," students can tell about a time they resolved a cultural misunderstanding and weave it onto their response.
- Michelle Obama recently gave an example of what students could use in an interview, "Traveling abroad has provided me with greater knowledge and appreciation of global communities and how to effectively navigate around communication and cultural barriers".
- From studying abroad you've interacted with different cultures, managed a budget, planned and organized outings in other countries, gained the ability to adapt to new situations, and communicated across language barriers just to name a few!

SAMPLE RESUME

EDUCATION

Name of Home College or University — City, State
Degree Name, Latin Honors — month and year-month and year
-GPA if desired, honors societies, etc.
-Activites or clubs

Name of Abroad University — City, Country
Study Abroad — month and year-month and year
-Mention any volunteer work you did abroad, any classes you took that pertain to the jobs you are applying for, what skills you gained abroad (adaptability, problem solving, foreign language skills, etc.)

BENEFITS OF STUDYING ABROAD FOR YOUR CAREER

MARIAH-SAI AMBASSADOR

Studying abroad is a life changing experience. It impacts your life in so many different ways, from academically to personally. Living abroad removes you from your comfort zone and makes you more independent, adaptable, confident and open-minded. These newly acquired traits not only help your personal development, but can also advance your career possibilities. Here are a few ways studying abroad can help you:

ON YOUR RESUME...

Study abroad should definitely be included somewhere on your resume. Including the experience on your resume will give you a competitive advantage over other applicants. Depending on how relevant your experience is to your overall career objectives, you will either put it in the Education section or the Experience section of your resume.

WITH YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH...

An elevator pitch is an essential part of your career search. It should always be your automatic response to, "Tell me about yourself" or what you say when you want to impress that upper level manager in an elevator. This one-minute speech should be packed with your experiences, accomplishments and goals for the future. Mentioning your study abroad experience during your elevator pitch will show that your college experience was well rounded. Also be prepared with more specific examples of how study abroad helped you developed a professional skill. For example, you could demonstrate how you became more flexible and self-sufficient by discussing the challenges of navigating the public transportation system. This is far more impressive than simply saying your time abroad was "amazing! So fun... it changed my life!"









IN AN INTERVIEW...

Interviewers usually ask you to tell them about yourself, this is where you begin with your elevator pitch, to begin the interview. They will ask follow-up questions like, "Can you tell me more about your study abroad experience" and "Can you tell me about a time that you faced a challenge and how you handled it while abroad?" To prepare for the interview, you should come up with answers to these and similar questions. It is always better to include examples in your answers to demonstrate how you developed the skills you are claiming to have. If you want to highlight your improved language skills, bring up a time you had a great conversation with a local in their language. To feature your adaptability and professional competency, you could mention a time when your travel plans went awry and you had to solve the problem using your analytical skills.

THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER...

Studying abroad will impact your professional career by changing you as a person. During your time in your host country, you will gain an appreciation and knowledge about other cultures. This newfound understanding will lead to an increase in self-awareness and confidence. The personal development and growth gained throughout the study abroad experience is the most beneficial reason to go abroad. Additionally, you can hone your foreign language skills, which is becoming increasingly valuable in the globalizing business world. Finally, the networking possibilities are endless. Every professor, friend and travel companion you meet becomes part of your network. More career opportunities will become available to you the larger your professional and personal networks are.



REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

SYMPTOMS

- Boredom
- Not being able to explain your experience/ people not being as interested in hearing every detail
- "Homesick" for your study abroad home
- People have changed
- Comparing home to abroad life
- Not knowing how to use the skills learned abroad
- Not knowing how to use your experience abroad to its fullest potential
- Home life has continued to go on while you were away

HOW TO OVERCOME CULTURE SHOCK

- Write about the experience
- Find ways to stay connected to the experience (ambassador programs, working for your school's study abroad office, etc.)
- Stay in touch with your abroad friends
- Explore your home – get out of the house, catch up with old friends, discover new parts of the city
- Keep up some of the habits you acquired abroad to make the transition easier

SPOTLIGHT TESTIMONIAL

"Adapting back to life in the US was really difficult. I found myself questioning why I had ever come home in the first place. Where was my daily cafe con leche, my school lined with glass tiles, or my bedroom balcony overlooking the city? Everything that I thought would be comfortable back home became uncomfortable."

-Bailey, SAI Alumna



When you go abroad, everyone always tells you about reverse culture shock. I always thought that was going to be the worst part of coming back, it wouldn't be the culture shock going to Italy, it will be the sadness when I got back from Italy. So, when I got back to Jersey in July, I was surprised when I slipped right back to my home routine. Now, don't get me wrong, I missed Siena and my daily caffe latte but being home was nice after being away for 6 months. So, July and August went by without a hitch and then I moved back into school.

As it turns out, no one tells you about how hard it is to get back into the swing of things in the academic world. My last semester had been spent going to class and then going home or hanging out in the piazza. I didn't have hours of homework and my free time was just that, free time. So, in August as I sat in a meeting talking about all my responsibilities, I was shocked. I just didn't want to do anything. In Italy I loved leaving class and going to read in the piazza or getting my gelato snack. Being abroad had allowed me to take a breath and a break from everything that I have to do when I'm in the States. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate all the volunteering and extra stuff I have going on at school, but sometimes there's so much! And it took me a while to get back into that, let me tell you.

Don't worry, it gets better as the semester progresses, but boy did it get me. What helped me were the hundreds (ok maybe dozens) of pictures I put up on my wall (all of Italy) and my roommates. I also stay in touch with all of my friends from abroad and I know that they went through the same thing that I did. I loved my time abroad and so coming back was difficult not just because of the work but also because of the great time I had there. So, sometimes I have this 'college shock' but I get through it. And it helps that I'm definitely going back this summer. So don't worry too much about the culture shock and reverse culture shock, but definitely look out for that college shock.





ROUND 2

TIPS FOR FINDING JOBS, INTERNSHIPS, AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD



Going abroad tends to instill in people a desire to continue exploring. After a glorious term (or terms) abroad, the need to see more of the world is almost inevitable. Whether you wish to spend a few months abroad or years, we have some options for you:

- VOLUNTEER ABROAD-UN VOLUNTEERS, PEACE CORPS, MOVING WORLDS, ETC.
- GRAD SCHOOL ABROAD
- WORK ABROAD
- TEACH ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

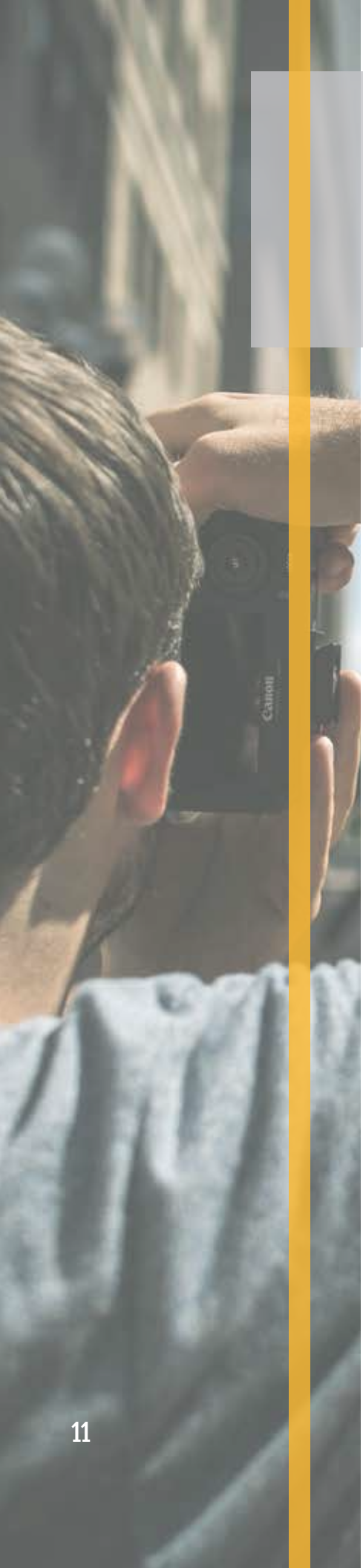
Some websites to check out:

- JOBSABROAD.COM
- TRANSITIONSABROAD.COM
- IDEALIST.ORG

SPOTLIGHT TESTIMONIAL

"Education abroad was eye-opening, wonderfully challenging, and absolutely unbelievable. I cannot wait to share my experiences and help people accomplish their dreams to study abroad!"

-Kevin, SAI Alumnus



SAI AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Whether you plan to one day return overseas or stay in the US, you can stay connected to your time abroad through the SAI Ambassador Program.

SAI Ambassadors are a group of carefully selected students, currently enrolled in a U.S. or Canadian university or college, who have participated in an SAI program. The SAI Ambassador program provides SAI alumni the opportunity to share their study abroad experiences with prospective students, while building their knowledge of international education.

General duties for SAI Ambassadors include, but are not limited to:

- Facilitation of group informational sessions about studying abroad—in general and with SAI—to classes, clubs, and/or organizations on campus, in collaboration with their home school study abroad office
- Submission of articles for the SAI blog
- Assistance during study abroad fairs
- Hosting an SAI information table in home school common area, in accordance with study abroad office protocol
- Assisting potential SAI students by answering questions prior to their departure.

SAI Ambassadors will acquire knowledge of each unique program and location that SAI offers. In addition to sharing their experiences with interested students, they should be prepared to give presentations and answer basic questions about any SAI program.

Why be an SAI Alumni Ambassador:

- You will gain valuable experience for your resume
- SAI provides references and letters of recommendation for active participants.
- You will be eligible for a paid summer internship at SAI's main office in beautiful Sonoma County, California or eligible for an all-expense paid participation at the NAFSA: Association of International Educators conference in your region.