

“Marketing your Study Abroad Experience” Script

1. Thank you for viewing the Stephen F. Austin State University Career Services, “Marketing your Study Abroad Experience” presentation. I am a Student Career Advocate and will guide you through the basics of marketing your study abroad experience. Studying abroad can be a very rewarding experience not only for personal growth but for professional growth as well. It is important to know how to make these skills marketable to employers. Having said that, how can you showcase what you have learned through this experience? This information will help you prepare for the study abroad experience by teaching you what you should consider before, during, and after you return to the states; in addition, it will help you decide between the semester study abroad trip vs. the yearlong experience. You will also learn how to effectively present your study abroad experience on your resume, cover letter, and during a job interview. So grab a pen and paper and listen up!
2. First off, let’s look at some of the benefits of studying abroad. According the transitions at broad.com, 98% of respondents said study abroad helped them to better understand their own cultural values and biases, and 82% replied that study abroad contributed to their developing a more sophisticated way of looking at the world.
3. By studying abroad you can gain an “edge” on fellow classmates. In a recent poll by Student Universe, 75% of students said that their time studying abroad influenced their career path. As you can see from the results, time studying abroad is quite the transformative experience that enhances your personal brand, but only if you take advantage of it to sell yourself well. For more information on how to develop your personal brand check out our “First Impressions & Personal Branding” presentation online.
4. Some of you may consider a semester long or even two week study abroad experience. Preparing for what you want to draw from this adventure will help you transfer this experience to your career development. Indeed, the experiences and skills you will develop abroad will help you mature both personally and academically, and could improve your career prospects. Research finds that the longer students study abroad the greater the academic, career, cultural and personal benefits. A full year abroad gives students a much more immersive experience and allows for more development than just a semester.

It takes time to transition from tourist to resident. During the first half of the year you will be learning, adjusting, and assimilating information at an incredibly rapid pace. During the second half of your year you will be applying what you have learned and you will finally feel "at home" in your host country.

For some it may all boil down to cost. "Can I afford two weeks, a semester, or a full year abroad experience?" Things to consider include housing costs, traveling costs, and of course, academic costs. Scholarships are available through the study abroad office so check them out online or visit Office of International Programs, Liberal Arts North, Room 402 to learn more about ways to fund your experience.

5. So before you take off on this new adventure, spend some time getting prepared by thinking about the goals you want to accomplish. This is your opportunity to learn a new language, learn about the history of an ancient civilization, or learn about a different culture and meet people from all over the world; but before you begin, think about the goals related to your ultimate career desire? Also, be sure to research the cultural differences. You want to make sure you learn the etiquette of a different culture before you get there. In this situation, it is better to be over prepared than under prepared.
6. Transferable skills is a topic you are going to hear about quite often. These are skills that you can gain from experiences, both in and outside of the classroom that you can take with you from one job to another, no matter the job type or industry. These are skills that will continuously help you to develop as a professional and will help you stand out to future employers. It is important that during your experience you think about what transferrable skills you are gaining and how can you relay what you have accomplished through this opportunity to be marketable to future employers.
7. During your study abroad take the time to reflect on your experience while you are in this new environment. The best way to process this is by thinking about how you are changing, growing and learning. Whether you blog, video blog, or journal, documenting your experience will not only help you grow but also help you remember the adventure for the future. Think about the challenges that you have faced and what skills you gained from overcoming those challenges. Remember those transferrable skills we previously discussed? This would be a great time to utilize those!
8. So now that you have returned back to your home country after your study abroad, it is time to reflect on your overall experience. Refer back to your documentation; add this

new experience to your resume and think about how it relates to your future career. Also, utilize Career Services to help you master your career development through resume writing, interview preparation, and the job search process. We are located on the third floor of the Rusk building.

9. Here is a list of questions to help you begin to identify some of the international knowledge, skills and experience you may now possess. After you have completed this experience take time to consider your answers to these questions and how you can relay the information to a future employer.
10. Don't forget to add that experience to your resume! You can include your study abroad as part of your education section, possibly including those specific skills relevant to your academic experience. You may also include a specific aspect of your study abroad as part of a related experience section.
11. Cover letter writing can be a very tedious task, but don't let that overwhelm you. When writing your letter, the following questions can help you focus on the specific message you are trying to get across to employers. Briefly describe the skills and experiences gained from international exposure and how those skills are transferable to the position in which you are applying. You want your cover letter to sell your experience in the best way possible without being repetitive from your resume.
12. An interview allows you the opportunity to share information regarding your skills, experience and personality and how these fit the needs of the company with who you are applying. Discuss the skills and experiences you gained while studying abroad and connect how they help you add value to the employer. While this experience is important, it should not be the only point of reference. Remember, that you should try to offer an employer a variety of examples from your past experiences in order to highlight the skills asked about during the interview.
13. Let us, Career Services, arm you with the confidence, knowledge, and skills that will propel your personal career development and prepare you to find the career that is right for you. By providing services such as career coaching, resume assistance, and mock interviews, we offer you the opportunity to develop skills necessary for the position you wish to obtain. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "You do not have to

see the whole journey, you just have to take the first step” by visiting us in the Rusk building on the third floor. Thank you for watching our presentation.

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