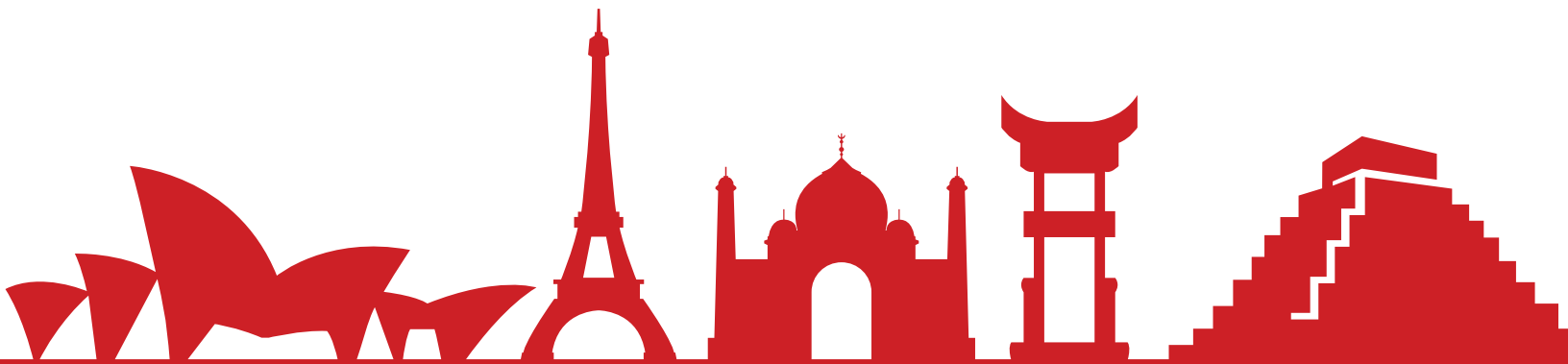


# WELCOME HOME 101

Resources for Returned Students





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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









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

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

# COMING HOME:

## Navigating Reverse Culture Shock & Transitioning Back Home

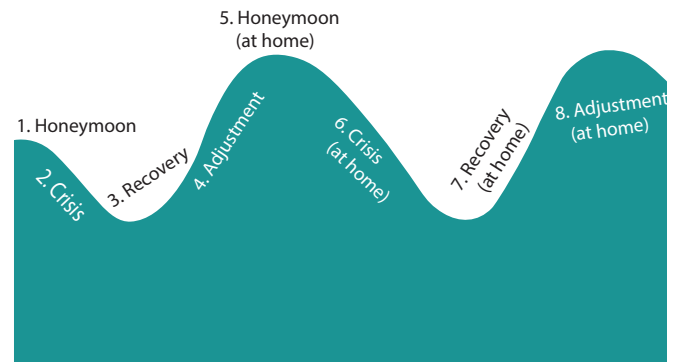
Many people agree that learning abroad can be one of the most meaningful and life-changing experiences of one's college years, and indeed, one's whole life. For this reason, coming home after learning abroad can be quite a big feat.

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

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

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

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



Furthermore, they state:

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

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



# COMMON CHALLENGES FOR RETURNED STUDENTS

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



## 1. Boredom

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

## 2. "No One Wants to Hear"

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



### 3. They Can't Explain

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

### 4. Reverse "Homesickness"

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

### 5. Relationships Have Changed

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

#### ON A GOOD DAY

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

#### ON A BAD DAY

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

## 6. People see the “Wrong” Changes

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

## 7. People Misunderstand

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

## 8. Feelings of Alienation/Critical Eyes

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



International Studies Abroad





Caitlin Janeway 2010



Abeni Czajowski 2016

### **9. Inability to Apply New Knowledge and Skills**

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

### **10. Loss/Compartmentalization of Experience**

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

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



# ADVICE FOR RETURNED STUDENTS: How to Combat Culture Shock

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

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

## **1. Home has changed**

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

## **2. You have changed**

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

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

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



Deandra Lanier 2010

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

### **1. Prepare for the adjustment process**

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

### **2. Give yourself time to adjust**

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

### **3. Understand that the familiar will seem different**

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

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

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

### **5. Reserve judgments**

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

### **6. Respond thoughtfully and slowly**

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

### **7. Cultivate sensitivity**

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

### **8. Beware of comparisons**

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

### **9. Be flexible**

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

### **10. Seek support networks**

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

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

#### **1. Continuing your language learning and intercultural education**

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

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

#### **3. Writing about your experiences**

#### **4. Involving your friends**

#### **5. Maintaining your international friendships and relationships**

#### **6. Making new international connections**

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

More information on the Global U Program may be found at [learningabroad@utah.edu](mailto:learningabroad@utah.edu).



Jenny Handel 2016

# REFLECTING ON YOUR LEARNING ABROAD EXPERIENCE

Note your top memory in each area.

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

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

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# ARTICULATING YOUR SKILLS FROM LEARNING ABROAD

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

Want more help? Visit your Career Coach: [careers.utah.edu](https://careers.utah.edu) or email [learningabroad@utah.edu](mailto:learningabroad@utah.edu)

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

# CREATING SMART GOALS AFTER YOUR LEARNING ABROAD PROGRAM

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

## SMART goals are:

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

**Measurable** – Include a numeric or descriptive measurement

**Attainable** – Consider the resources needed to set a realistic goal

**Relevant** – Make sure the goal is consistent with your mission

**Time-bound** – Set a realistic deadline



Think about setting goals in the following areas:

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



**GOAL 1:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CURRENT DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE TO ACHIEVE GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

I will take the following steps to achieve this goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL 2:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CURRENT DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE TO ACHIEVE GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

I will take the following steps to achieve this goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL 3:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CURRENT DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE TO ACHIEVE GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

I will take the following steps to achieve this goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



# TRANSLATING YOUR LEARNING ABROAD EXPERIENCE TO AN EMPLOYER



Sure, your international experience was “Awesome!” and “Amazing!” and you “had the time of your life!”

But how can you express the benefit of your experience to an employer? The skills and perspective you gained from your international experience sets you apart from other students. Here’s how you can show that to employers.

Words and phrases which emphasize **skills** and **qualities** gained from learning abroad:

- Adaptable to new environments
- Appreciative diversity
- Awareness of global issues
- Flexibility and patience
- Foreign language proficiency
- Handle difficult situations/stress
- Inquisitive, curious, and open-minded
- Self-confident and independent
- Willing to take initiative

“A global point of view is a critical skill set that is not easily come by in the US, and it is a skill that facilitates creativity, diversity of thinking, and better skills for working with a variety of individuals with varied backgrounds, interests and capabilities.”

—Advertising Executive

“I usually bring up my international experience when asked, ‘tell me something interesting about yourself’.” —Clinical Research Coordinator

“My experience in Russia and Ukraine differentiated me from the masses of ‘standard’ college grads hunting for the most desirable jobs. I heard it time and time again from employers.”

—Account Planning Manager



## Related Action Verbs:

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



## Self-Reflection

Be prepared to give insightful comments about your experience at any time. Which stories highlight new skills and knowledge from your learning abroad experience?

- How did your study abroad experience enhance your knowledge, skills, and understanding of your intended career field? What assets might international study yield as opposed to someone who studied domestically?
- Share an example of a travel situation that helped build your understanding of human motivation. How did this enhance your understanding of leadership or teamwork?
- How did you adjust/adapt to new cultural surroundings? Share examples from academic, social, work settings. How did these influence your ability to interact successfully with others?
- Were there ever times when you may have been in danger or afraid? What did you learn from it and why?
- Did you gain a new appreciation for the current events/issues in country/region where you studied? How so?
- What was the most significant thing you learned about yourself through your study abroad experience?

## Résumé

Locate your international experience where it makes the most sense for your intended position. There are several correct ways to do this:

- List the program in your **education** section if it was a study abroad program.
- If you held a job, internship, or volunteer position while abroad, you could list it in your **relevant experience** section.
- If the work you did abroad isn't directly related to your intended career, list it as a work experience but focus on the cross-cultural **learning** and **skills** gained.

Visit [careers.utah.edu](https://careers.utah.edu) for sample résumés.

## Cover Letter

Think through how your experience relates to your field. Then develop a strategy to specifically address this in your cover letter or résumé.

My experience living in Ecuador will enhance my ability to communicate and interact effectively with the local Latino population this position will work closely with.

Studying in Brazil provided me unique insights into the country's education disparities and ignited my passion for helping disadvantaged and underrepresented students with an organization such as yours.

My studies in Japan provided me with a great insight into the cultural differences that influence consumers in different countries and will improve my ability to contribute to international marketing initiatives.

Even if your career goals do not include a specific international dimension, you can promote the general transferable skills from your experiences such as independence, confidence, and problem solving.

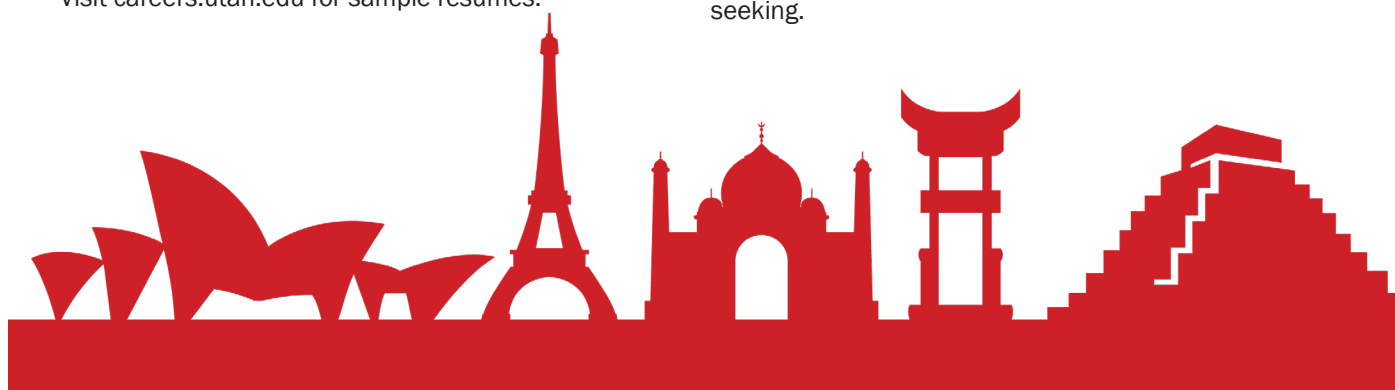
## Networking & Interviews

If someone asks about your international experience, take it as an opportunity to expand. Don't let the moment pass by with a simple "Yes, it was great!"

Use the reflection questions to prepare specific examples of stories/responses in advance.

- Did you learn to work with a more diverse group of people than you had previously been exposed to?
- Why did you choose the program?
- Did you engage in a new language, activity, hobby, or skill?
- Did you travel independently outside the formal program?

Be sure to use an appropriate balance of international and domestic examples depending on the position you are seeking.



# SAMPLE COVER LETTER

John Hancock  
201 S 1460 E, Salt Lake City, UT | 801-581-6186 | [jstudent@university.edu](mailto:jstudent@university.edu)

May 3, 2017

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

Directed to a  
specific individual

Dear Ms. Smith and Ms. Charles,

Highlights why they want to work  
for this specific company.

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

Provides specific examples.

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

Showcases  
the results  
of their  
actions.

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

Sincerely,



John Hancock

Ends on a positive note and  
suggests an interview.

## Jane Doe

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

### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering**  
*University of Utah*

May 2016  
Salt Lake City, UT

### SKILLS

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

Highlight specific  
language skills

### SENIOR DESIGN PROJECT

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

### RELATED COURSE WORK

Engineering Electronics I  
Engineering Electronics II  
Digital Systems Design

Microwave Engineering I  
Antenna Theory and Design  
Digital Signal Processing

### EXPERIENCE

**SMAHT Ceramics, Inc**  
Technician

**Salt Lake City, UT**  
August 2007 – May 2012

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

#### International Rescue Committee

Job Developer

**Salt Lake City, UT**  
October 2007–July 2008

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

### EMPLOYMENT

**ProEx Device Programming**  
Device Programmer

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

**Salt Lake City, UT**  
July 2014 – Present

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

**Deluxe Corporation**  
Press Operator

**Salt Lake City, UT**  
August 2012 – March 2014

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

### INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Joint Relief Ministry**  
Administrator

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

**Cairo, Egypt**  
February 2006 – February 2007

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

**University of Oviedo**  
Study Abroad Student

**Oviedo, Spain**  
Summer 2011

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

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



## Joe Doe

2000 East Sun Way  
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

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

### Education

**Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications**  
**University of Utah**

*December 2016*  
Salt Lake City, UT

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

Study Abroad Experiences often fit well under your education section

#### **Study Abroad: Oviedo, Spain**

*Summer 2015*

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

Highlight specific language skills gained from your experience

### Experience

#### **T-Mobile**

##### **Representative Sales Associate**

*May 2014-Present*  
Salt Lake City, UT

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

#### **1320 KFAN**

##### **Associate Producer "Brown & the Booner" Morning Show**

*July 2013-Present*  
Salt Lake City, UT

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

#### **Utah Jazz**

##### **Ticket Sales Representative**

*October 2012-May 2013*  
Salt Lake City, UT

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

### Volunteer/Service

#### **Soldier Hollow Golf Course**

##### **Service Learning Project, University of Utah**

*Spring 2012*  
Midway, UT

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

# HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR RETURNED STUDENTS

## **BENNION CENTER**

*Union, RM 101 | 801-581-4811 | [bennioncenter.org](http://bennioncenter.org)*

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

## **CAREER SERVICES**

*SSB, RM 350 | 801-581-6186 | [careers.utah.edu](http://careers.utah.edu)*

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

## **DEPT. OF WORLD LANGUAGES & CULTURES**

*LNCO, RM 1400 | 801-581-7561 | [languages.utah.edu](http://languages.utah.edu)*

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

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE (ELI)**

*Annex, RM 2202 | 801-581-4600 | [continue.utah.edu/eli](http://continue.utah.edu/eli)*

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

## **FULBRIGHT**

*Bldg. 73, RM 223 | Prof. Howard Lehman, Representative | [global.utah.edu/global-resources/Fulbright-student](http://global.utah.edu/global-resources/Fulbright-student)*

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

## **HINCKLEY INSTITUTE OF POLITICS (HIP)**

*Bldg. 72, RM 102 | 801-581-8501 | [hinckley.utah.edu](http://hinckley.utah.edu)*

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

## **INTERNATIONAL & AREA STUDIES (IAS)**

*CTIHB, RM 210 | 801-581-6101 | [international-studies.utah.edu](http://international-studies.utah.edu)*

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

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLARS SERVICES (ISSS)**

*Union, RM 401 | 801-581-8876 | [internationalcenter.utah.edu](http://internationalcenter.utah.edu)*

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

## **MUSE PROJECT (MY "U" SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE)**

*Sterling Sill Center, RM 128 | 801-587-3177 | [muse.utah.edu](http://muse.utah.edu)*

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

## **OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH (OUR)**

*Sterling Sill Center, RM 005 | 801-581-8070 | [our.utah.edu](http://our.utah.edu)*

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

## **PEACE CORPS**

*Steve Price, Regional Recruiter | 801-529-7885 | [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov)*

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

# READING LIST

## ARTICLES

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

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

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## BOOKS

### CAREER GUIDES

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

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

### NON-FICTION

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

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

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

### FICTION

The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho

On the Road, Jack Kerouac

### THEORY/TRAVEL

The Art of Coming Home, Craig Storti (2003)

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

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

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

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



D. Dupree

## MAGAZINES & OTHER SOURCES

[Abroad View](#)

[Matador Network](#)

[Glimpse](#)

[Transitions Abroad](#)

[Life After Study Abroad](#)

# CONCLUSION: Now What?

## Making the Most of Your Learning Abroad Experience

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

*–Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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

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

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

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

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

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

*–William J. Fulbright, from The Price of Empire*



# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**MEGAN RANDALL, M.A. – Learning Abroad Coordinator  
Lead Coordinator for the Re-Entry Team**

*Project Lead, Content Creator, & Editor*

Megan is a native Vermonter who joined Learning Abroad in January 2016. She has traveled extensively throughout South Africa, Tanzania, Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Spain. Megan advises students and manages faculty-led programs in the Colleges of Fine Arts and Humanities. She is the lead Coordinator for the Re-Entry Team, where she manages the Global U Program and coordinates programming for returned students. She is also a member of the Pre-Departure Orientation Team. Megan holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Skidmore College and a Master's degree in International Education from the School for International Training (SIT) Graduate Institute.

*"Travel changes you. As you move through this life...you leave marks behind, however small. And in return, life – and travel – leaves marks on you." – Anthony Bourdain*



**ERIC BOSCAN, M.A. – Learning Abroad Coordinator  
Event and Resources Coordinator for the Re-Entry Team**

*Content Creator & Editor*

Eric, originally from Salt Lake City, joined Learning Abroad in June 2016 after relocating back to Salt Lake City from Denver, Colorado, where he attended graduate school. Having grown up in a multi-cultural family, Eric has traveled and lived in Panama, Venezuela, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Amsterdam, and Egypt. Eric advises students in the College of Health and all the Health Sciences (Nursing, Pharmacy, Dental, and Medicine). He is the lead coordinator for the Exchange Team and works directly with incoming exchange students who come to the University of Utah. Eric holds a Bachelor's degree in Middle East Studies – Arabic and Mass Communication and a Master's degree from the University of Denver – Korbel School of International Studies.

*"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." – T.S. Elliot*



**WHITNEY GRAVES – Learning Abroad Program Specialist  
Re-Entry Team member**

*Editor*

Whitney is a native Utahn who joined Learning Abroad in October 2016 after relocating back to Salt Lake City from Denali, Alaska, where she lived and worked for several years (she can't say that she misses the -40°F winters!). Ever the world traveler, Whitney has lived in Bulgaria, volunteered in India and visited another 45 countries. As Program Specialist, she assists with program application management and serves as the liaison between students and Learning Abroad's affiliate partners. She also serves on the Re-Entry and Pre-Departure Orientation/Learning Abroad 101 Teams. Whitney holds a Bachelor's degree in Sustainable Tourism Management from the University of Utah.

*"We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm, and adventure. There is no end to the adventures we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open." – Jawaharlal Nehru*



**MADDY BRADSHAW – Learning Abroad Peer Advisor  
Re-Entry Team member**

*Editor*

Maddy is a senior studying Psychology, Religious Studies and Italian. She attended one learning abroad program in Rome and another in Siena where she ate her weight in pizza, pasta and gelato both times. In her spare time, you can catch her browsing the internet for cheap flights, reading a book, or telling her friends yet again, how amazing her time in Italy was.



**KATHRYN TIMM, M.ED. – Learning Abroad Coordinator**

*Designer*

Kathryn hails from Michigan and joined Learning Abroad in June 2016. She has lived and studied in France and the Dominican Republic. Additionally, Kathryn has traveled to Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Scotland, French Speaking Canada, and England. She advises students and manages faculty-led programs from: Architecture, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Honors, and Education. In addition, Kathryn contributes to Learning Abroad's Marketing and Assessment. She holds a Bachelor's degree in French from Central Michigan University and a Master's degree in Higher Education with an emphasis in College Student Affairs Leadership from Grand Valley State University.

*"The best way to get to know yourself is to seek to understand others." - André Gide*

**“Congratulations!**

**Today is your day.**

**You're off to Great Places!**

**You're off and away!”**

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

