International experiences greatly affect individuals at
the personal, academic and professional levels. The
exposure to adverse situations and new environments
that study abroad provides, not only enables students
to be more flexible and adapt to new surroundings,
but it helps to develop knowledge, skills and abilities
that are desirable in any professional setting. Thus,
it is essential that you leverage your study abroad
experience in your job search via your cover letter,
resume and most certainly in your interviews.

Unfortunately, when interviewing candidates, many
potential employers look for a certain skill set that
fits the available position, but fail to recognize the
benefits of international exposure and how they apply
to the open job position.

BEGINNING YOUR JOB SEARCH
When beginning your job search, it is important that
you differentiate yourself from other candidates by
highlighting your international experiences.

• Develop a list of key target companies you would
be interested in working for.

• Consider targeting local companies with
international connections.

• Be willing to take a first job with an international
company that may not have an international
dimension to it - you always have the opportunity
to work your way into the international division
once you have proved yourself otherwise.

• Join professional organizations with international
chapters.

• Network, network, network! Let every recruiter,
professor, etc. know what you are doing and how
it fits in with your career goals.

SKILLS FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES
Be able to recognize your skills that you have gained
from your international experience and how those
skills will ‘add value’ to you as an employee. Put
into writing how your international experience fits
into your long-term career goals. Develop a strategy
as to how what you learned abroad might uniquely
benefit a professional in the particular career field you
are interested in. For example, you could say “My
experience living in Ecuador will enhance my ability
to communicate and interact effectively with the local
Latino population this position has the opportunity to
work closely with” or “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.”

You will also want to identify the skills you have
acquired while abroad, such as: enhanced cultural
awareness, sensitivity to customs and cultural
differences, foreign language proficiency, adaptability,
ability to identify and achieve goals, increased
confidence, initiative and independence, awareness
of global economic and political issues, and the ability
to work in cross-cultural teams.

STUDY ABROAD AND YOUR RESUME
Consider listing the study abroad program in your
education section of your resume rather than in the
activities section. If you worked while abroad, list the
experience and focus on the cross-cultural learning.
Include a skills section in your resume listing specific
skills gained while abroad- refer to previous section
for examples.

STUDY ABROAD AND YOUR INTERVIEW
Employers might inquire about your international
experience while conducting an interview by asking
the following questions:

While abroad, did you:

“Complete a specific project or research
applicable to your field of interest?”

“Travel independently?”

“Learn to work with a more diverse group of
people than you had previously been exposed to?”

“Resolve conflict based on misunderstandings or
cultural differences?”

“Learn new activities, languages, hobbies or
skills?”

Tell me about a time when you:

“Dealt with uncertainty or ambiguity.”

“Confronted a challenging situation.”

“Had to handle conflict.”

“Had to learn something new.”

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