

▪ ▪ ▪ POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE ▪ ▪ ▪

from *Maximizing study abroad: A students' guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use*

This sheet provides a handy reference of skills you may develop as a direct result of your experiences abroad. Use this to spark ideas for creating a resume, preparing for an interview, and reflecting upon your experiences.

Skills

- Understand cultural differences and similarities
- Adapt to new environments
- Learn through listening and observing
- Establish rapport quickly
- Function with a high level of ambiguity
- Take initiative and risks
- Utilize time management skills
- Identify problems and utilize available resources to solve the problems
- Accept responsibility
- Communicate despite barriers
- Learn quickly
- Handle difficult situations
- Handle stress
- Manage/organize
- Lead others in formal/informal groups
- Conduct research despite language and cultural differences
- Cope with rejection

Qualities

- Self-reliance
 - High energy level/enthusiasm
 - Appreciation of diversity
 - Perseverance
 - Flexibility
 - Open-mindedness
 - Assertiveness
 - Inquisitiveness
 - Self-confidence
 - Self-knowledge
 - Independence
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▪ **SEEK OUT INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

There are a multitude of opportunities for you to volunteer or find employment that let you utilize your bilingual and bicultural skills:

- Become a homestay family to an international student. Agencies and universities are always looking for suitable homestay families for students, and this is perhaps one of the best means of keeping connected internationally. Be willing to accept a student outside of your own experience and expand your cultural horizons.
- Volunteer or intern in a study abroad office. Your international skills and knowledge about living overseas can be put to valuable use by advising prospective study abroad students and by participating in pre-departure and re-entry orientation programs.
- Volunteer at an office for international students. Offices that work with international students tend to be understaffed and can use volunteers to do a number of vital tasks such as transporting students from the airport, or organizing a drive to collect used household goods and winter clothing for international students, or organizing events or volunteering at orientation for new students.
- Become a buddy or tutor for international students. Already knowing how it feels to go through cross-cultural adjustment in a foreign country, you have a unique perspective and can better understand the needs of international students studying in the U.S. Use those cross-cultural skills to help others and, in turn, deepen your own learning and make valuable international connections.
- Seek out volunteer or work positions at international organizations located in your area. You might be surprised at the number and breadth of international linkages that already exist in your area.
- Volunteer to work with refugees or immigrants in your community. The needs and backgrounds of refugees and immigrants in this country vary tremendously, but they typically do not have the kind of resources that international students have. More and more communities around the country have refugee communities that could use the support of culturally sensitive volunteers.
- Act as a tour guide for visitors from your host country. Many companies now have in-house opportunities for bilingual/bicultural translators and interpreters.
- Seek out opportunities through work, school, or other means to go abroad again. Use your cultural and linguistic fluency to accompany a delegation or tour to your country of interest. They do need you and your skills, even if they might not be aware of it yet!
- A wide variety of materials are available dealing with how to find an international job, whether you want to travel abroad again or be based in the U.S.
- There are also many opportunities for interning or volunteering overseas, which may be a great next step for you. Some of these experiences are longer term (1 to 2 years) and some are available for a few months or less.

Keep in mind that as more and more connections worldwide are formed, there will be even greater need for your international skills and perspectives. As someone who has experienced another culture first-hand, you are well equipped to contribute to the growth in international and intercultural awareness happening at home and throughout the world.
