GUIDE TO

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
WHILE STUDYING ABROAD

FIRST STEPS
✓ Ask an academic advisor about study abroad opportunities.
✓ Look for upcoming events that can inform you about studying abroad.
✓ Explore all of your options to find the best fit possible.

BEFORE STUDYING ABROAD

Goals for Studying Abroad

Reflect on the following questions:

- Why do I want to study abroad? Am I looking to get away from home or do I want to get seriously involved in the other country?
- How does this experience relate to my personal and professional goals?
- Are there certain countries or regions that might offer me unique opportunities (e.g., learning a 2nd or 3rd language, gaining exposure to particular industries, developing an international perspective on my specific field)?
- What specific types of opportunities could I seek out while abroad to better prepare myself for my future career?

Things to Do Before Leaving

Check out resources on studying/working abroad (e.g. GoinGlobal.com). They often have important tips on the host country culture, especially the professional culture.

Plan on bringing business/professional clothes with you. Even though packing space will be tight, you never know when you may need them.

Start building professional relationships before you leave via email, phone calls, and/or letters. The following resources can provide you with some excellent information:

- Professors in the field (both at Mizzou and at universities abroad)
- Other students (including those returning from abroad, those already abroad, and those local to where you will be studying)
- Alumni living in your host country
- Professional organizations
- Conferences you might attend while abroad
- Employers
- Career Centers (both at Mizzou and at universities abroad; they may have connections with local companies in your field)
Connect to your local international community. Investigate work regulations in your host country for students studying abroad. You may want to try to find part-time employment while you are abroad. The following table should help you with your search.

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**WHILE YOU ARE ABROAD**

As you begin to become more familiar with the ins and outs of your host country, recognize that you are in the process of developing a wide range of transferable skills that you can apply to other situations in the future. The following suggestions can help you to be proactive and to take advantage of career development opportunities once you have begun to adjust to living in your host country:

**Network, network, network!** Keep a “contacts notebook” to help you stay in touch with the people you meet while you are abroad. Include names, contact information, where you met, what they do, etc.

**Take advantage of opportunities to learn** about the work culture, local economy, and the job market from your host family and the friends you make during your time abroad.

**Research your field in the country you are visiting.** Informational interviews, job shadowing, and site visits at local companies are all ways to help you learn about your field in the local country.

**Investigate the typical job search process.** Types of skills that employers tend to look for, possible costs related to your future job search, and work visa regulations for your country of interest.

**Scout local newspapers and other publications for job postings.** They can help you identify which employment sectors have the greatest demand.

**Try to secure an internship or part-time job;** consider volunteering; and look for other ways to gain experience while abroad. Build networking relationships, and develop transferable skills that are highly valued by companies back home and abroad.
**Reflecting on Transferable Skills**

Reflect on what you have learned abroad and create a list of the transferable skills you have developed while abroad. For example:

**In what ways did you grow and develop as a person (self-confidence, independence, tolerance, empathy, etc.)?** Many of these qualities are highly valued by employers, and now you will have specific examples and stories to illustrate these skills.

**What types of cross-cultural learning experiences did you have?** By interacting with locals and responding to the demands of living within another culture, you likely gained experiences is highly valued by many industries operating within a global marketplace.

**What communication skills did you develop during your time abroad?** As our country continues to become more diversified and the job market becomes more global, bi- or multilingualism will continue to be a skill that can set you apart. But even if you didn't have the chance to learn another language, you can highlight the specific ways you may have learned how to communicate differently within your host country's unique culture and lingo.

Check out our *Guide to Transferable Skills* for more information about the types of transferable skills that employers look for.

**Study Abroad in Interviews and Résumés**

*Use your résumé and interview to highlight* the various skills you developed during your study abroad experience. Skills such as communication, decision-making and problem-solving, as well as ability to verbally communicate with others are some of the top skills employers look for when hiring, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Highlighting examples of how you developed and utilized these skills while abroad will be extremely helpful for you in the job search process. Check out our *Guide to Résumés and Guide to Interviewing* for more information about how to develop a résumé and interviewing responses that incorporate your experiences from studying abroad.

*Stay connected and continue* to build relationships with your newly made contacts both locally and abroad. Be sure to update the people in your “contacts notebook” about your career plans on a regular basis. They may have useful suggestions or may know about specific opportunities in your area of interest.

**NEXT STEPS**

- ✓ Come to the MU Career Center to talk with someone about how to use international experience in your résumé or an interview.
- ✓ Visit our Handouts link on [http://career.missouri.edu/resources](http://career.missouri.edu/resources) to download other handouts in our Cultural Awareness series.