

PittGlobal

Study Abroad Re-Entry



Interview Workshop Facilitator Handbook

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Workshop Overview

The re-entry Interview Workshop is intended to equip students with the knowledge to leverage their study abroad experiences in an interview. 68% of employers do not believe international experience helps prepare students for jobs¹. The aim of this workshop is to develop student responses to common interview questions, give them tools to articulate their time abroad, and finally, gain employer buy-in in the study abroad process.

Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Through participation in this workshop students will:

- Reflect on their time abroad;
- Understand why some employers do not see the benefit in international experience;
- Brainstorm skills they learned while abroad that are applicable to their careers;
- Understand how to leverage study abroad to answer common interview questions; and
- Be able to professionally articulate their study abroad experiences to employers.

¹ Globalinks, University of Minnesota (2008), NACE, NAFSA (2011).

Workshop Outline

Participants

- 10-100

Time

- 1 hour

Outline

Icebreaker

- A number of icebreakers can be used depending on size of group.
 - Example: Students introduce themselves to a neighbor with the following:
 - Name,
 - Major(s)/Minor(s),
 - Where/when they studied abroad,
 - One funny story about their time abroad,
 - Etc.

Interview Practice

- Leveraging your Study Abroad Experience – Large Group Work and Activity
 - Appendices A/B
- Forbidden Words (Optional / If time permits) – Individual Activity
 - Appendix C
- Envelope Interviews – Small Group Work Activity
 - Appendices D/E

Closing/Questions

- This closing section should be left for students to ask questions they might still have.
- At the end of the workshop, it is recommended for the facilitator to remain to answer any questions students may want to ask one-on-one.

Facilitator Considerations and Tips

Be prepared to adjust the workshop once you arrive. Some activities require more participants than you have in attendance, and time considerations may require an activity to be cut. If an activity takes longer than anticipated but is going well, let the activity continue and adjust the rest of the workshop to compensate.

Arrive early. Take the time to arrive early to the workshop space. This gives you time to rearrange furniture if needed and ensure technology is working properly.

Set ground rules. Everyone's experience abroad was different, and students should be reminded to respect experiences that were different from their own. Everyone has a valid perspective and has a right for that to be respected.

Actively engage with participants. Listening and engaging with participants keeps them interested and serves as a good example for other participants as well. Don't forget to look out for side conversations and ask students to return their focus to the workshop.

Give everyone the opportunity to participate, but don't force someone to speak who doesn't want to. Encourage participation among all students, and don't allow one or two individuals to dominate large group discussions. Emphasize the importance of letting many voices and opinions be heard.

Encourage participants to work with new people. Suggest that students work with someone who is studying a different major or studied abroad in a different country than they did. This will help students to think of things from different perspectives.

Explain instructions clearly, before telling students to move. Otherwise, they will be focused on getting into place and are likely to miss important information.

Debrief activities where they occur before allowing participants to return to their seats. Participants will start to think about other things and have side conversations as they settle, so it is important to make sure that they are still focused on the activity when they debrief.

It's okay not to know all of the answers. If a student asks a question you don't know the answer to, you can ask other participants for their feedback or offer to look up the information and follow up with them after the workshop is over.

Go with the flow. Sometimes a participant does or says something unexpected that may cause an activity to get off track. If that happens, debrief it with the group and move on. Students (and you!) will still learn through this process.

Leveraging Your Study Abroad Experience

Facilitator Handout

In-person, Interview Workshop

Description of Activity

Using NAFSA's S.T.A.R. Approach for Job Interviewing, students will brainstorm and practice presenting competency in specific areas/skills that they gained during their study abroad experience. Students will be given the "Leveraging Your Study Abroad Experience" handout to facilitate articulating skills through story telling. Students will then work with a partner to practice articulation in an interview.

Participants

- 10-100

Time

- 25-35 minutes

Materials Needed

- "Leveraging Your Study Abroad Experience" Handout (1 per student) – see Appendix B
- Writing utensils (1 per student)
- Whiteboard/Other large writing area for facilitator

Process

Step 1 – Brainstorm (15-20 minutes)

- Have students brainstorm a list of skills that they gained while abroad and write list on whiteboard. Examples can be given to help start the process.
- Take a poll. Ask students how many of them think that the skills they acquired while abroad are transferable to their future/current careers; THEN share the following statistics (Sources: Globalinks, NACE, NAFSA (2011)):
 - Only 32% of employers believe that international experience helps prepare students for jobs.
 - 76% of students believe international experiences help prepare them for their jobs.
- Have students brainstorm and write list on whiteboard:
 - Why might employers not value study abroad?
 - How might we change the perception that study abroad isn't valuable/applicable to the workplace?

Step 2 – Worksheet (5-7 minutes)

- Pass out "Leveraging Your Study Abroad Experience" Student Handout/Worksheet to all participants.
- Give students approximately 3-5 minutes to fill out Skill 1 and Story 1 on page 2.
 - Students can choose a skill from page 1 or think of their own that they wish to convey.

Step 3 – Pair off (5 minutes)

- Have students pair up with a partner and practice telling their story about how they used/acquired their skill as they would to a future employer

Leveraging Your Study Abroad Experience

Student Handout

Interview Workshop

If you have studied abroad, you have gained valuable experience and skills that you can transfer to your career. These skills are uniquely possessed by people who have lived abroad, and several of these abilities are purposely sought out by employers. Therefore, before writing a resume, it is essential to review what competencies/skills you have gained from study abroad. Below is a short list of skills students can gain from study abroad.

Skills Gained While Abroad

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign language proficiency | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening and observing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coping skills (the ability to deal with stressful situations) | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Global competencies | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerance/open-mindedness | <input type="checkbox"/> Resource management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Patience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiasm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual curiosity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Perseverance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect for protocol and hierarchy | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased understanding of global matters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Time management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Getting Employers to See the Benefit

Unfortunately, 68% of employers do not believe international experience helps prepare students for jobs. Therefore, it is up to you to articulate the skills you gained in your study abroad experience.

You will want to effectively communicate not only the skills and experiences you have, but how those attributes will benefit the program or organization to which you are applying. Remember, just mentioning you studied abroad is not enough. You should elaborate on the skills and abilities you developed during your time abroad.

Here are real responses from students leveraging the benefits of study abroad in their career:

- I am interested in communications and psychology, in both of which I will be interacting with different types of people. Learning how to interact with people of different cultures benefitted me because I will have many more experiences where I will work with people different than myself.
- I feel as if I have a better understanding of the global market and different cultures. This can only help me as technology advances and the global economy plays a larger role in every country's home economies.
- Tons of benefits. I would say that it takes a certain bravery and personality to study abroad. My people skills, life skills, and personal knowledge of my tendencies and myself have all been improved.

S.T.A.R. Approach for Job Interviewing

| Competency or Skill | Story | S | T | A | R |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| What skill do you want to present? | Create story from past experience. | Situation | Task/Goal | Action | Result/Outcome |
| <p>Example: Leadership & Motivating Others</p> | While I was studying in Spain for the summer, I was on a project team with students from Spain. | On our team, I quickly learned that Spanish students tend to wait until the last day to complete assignments. However, that meant that we didn't have enough time to review each other's work. | So, my goal was to get them to complete their work 2 days before it was due. However, I noticed resistance when I asked because I was an outsider. | I decided to have 2 short coffee breaks with them per week to discuss some of their personal & cultural interests to break the ice. I always highlighted their strengths of looking at things from a different point of view than Americans. | It was amazing how things changed. They felt respected because I took an interest in them as people outside of the project. When I, again, expressed concern about finishing on time, they finished their work 3 or 4 days before the due date. |
| Skill 1 | Story 1 | | | | |
| Skill 2 | Story 2 | | | | |
| Skill 3 | Story 3 | | | | |

Benefits of the S.T.A.R. Approach:

1. You can present competency in specific areas such as Flexibility, Motivation, Problem-Solving, etc.
2. You can express yourself in a clear and articulate manner.
3. It helps you keep your response brief and concise within a structured flow.

Forbidden Words

Facilitator Handout

In-person, Reflection

Description of Activity

Forbidden words is a reflection activity designed to have students describe their experience abroad in a less common, more eloquent fashion. Students will be asked to write three sentences describing their time abroad with only one rule, they are not allowed to use words that students commonly use to describe study abroad.

Participants

- Any number

Time

- 5-10 minutes

Materials Needed

- Forbidden Words – Student Handout (1 per student) – See Appendix D
- Writing utensil (1 per student)

Process

Step 1 – Create (5 minutes)

- Hand out Forbidden Words – Student Handout and writing utensil to students.
- Instruct students to write three sentences describing their time abroad. However, they are not allowed to use the following words (provided on handout):

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ○ Awesome | ○ Horrible |
| ○ Cool | ○ Alright |
| ○ Life-changing | ○ Fine |
| ○ Great/Good | ○ Okay |
| ○ Amazing | ○ Challenging |
| ○ Fun | ○ Unforgettable |
| ○ Terrible | ○ Difficult |
- Students should be told that they should still try and describe their experience truthfully, but by using more varied vocabulary.

Step 2 – Partner(s) (5 minutes)

- Have students get in groups of three to four students.
- Ask students to share their descriptions with their group (though they are not required to).

Step 3 (Optional)

- Have each group choose the best description to share with the entire class. From the selected, a winner can be chosen and given a small prize as incentive.

Example Description:

“My study abroad experience was a wonderful opportunity to immerse myself in Spanish culture. I learned a lot about cultural differences, particularly in the classroom. It was a semester I will never forget.”

Envelope Interviews

Facilitator Handout

In-person, Interview Workshop

Description of Activity

Practice makes permanent. This activity will help students practice answering common interview questions and feel more comfortable leveraging study abroad in future interviews.

Participants

- 10-100

Time

- 15-30 minutes

Materials Needed

- Envelopes (1 per group)
- Interview questions, cut out and placed in envelope – see Appendix D

Process

Step 1 – Groups

- Have students get in groups of 2 (better for small workshop) or 3. Students will assign themselves 3 roles: Interviewer, Interviewee, Observer (if there are groups of two students, the observer role will not be filled).
- Give one envelope filled with interview questions to each group and explain instructions and roles.

Step 2 – Interviews (5 minutes)

- Instructions and Student Roles
 - Students will remain in their roles for five minutes (until told to switch)
 - The interviewer will reach into the envelope, randomly select one of the interview questions, and ask that question to the interviewee.
 - Interviewee will answer the question and integrate study abroad in the answer.
 - Observer will listen carefully to the questions and answers.
 - Once the interviewee is finished answering the questions, have interviewer select another question from envelope.
 - Continue until told to stop.
 - Give a short amount of time for Interviewer and Observer to give feedback to the Interviewee (1 positive and 1 improvement).

Step 3 – Switch Roles (10 minutes)

- Have students place questions selected back into envelope and switch roles (Observer becomes interviewer or interviewee, Interviewer becomes observer or interviewee, etc.)
- Repeat step 2
- After 5 minutes, students should switch roles again so all students have a chance to be interviewee. In groups of 2 during third round, have students go back-and-forth (interviewer for first question, interviewee for second question, etc.).

Envelope Interviews

Facilitator Material

In-person, Interview Workshop

Instructions

- Cut out each interview question below separately.
- Place all questions into envelopes.
- Note: Facilitators are encouraged to add questions when appropriate.
- The number of envelopes needed depends on size of workshop. One envelope will be needed for each group of 2-3 students in “Envelope Interviews” Activity.
 - 10 students = 4 envelopes,
 - 30 students = 10-15 envelopes,
 - 50 students = 17-20, etc.

Questions

Tell me about yourself.

We understand that you have just graduated from college and you are launching your career now. What skills can you bring to the table as a recent graduate?

How do you keep organized when there are many things going on at once?

Do you prefer to work independently or in a team? Can you give me an example of both?

I see that you spent a semester in Beijing (Rome, Buenos Aires, Cairo, etc.) Tell me about your experience.

What is one accomplishment that you are particularly proud of?

Can you tell me about a time that you took a risk and it paid off?

Tell me about a problem (either academic or work related) and how you went about solving it?

This is a fast-paced organization that prides itself on adapting to meet client and consumer needs and demands. Share an example of how you can adapt to changing situations.

What would your family friends say is your greatest strength? What would they say is your biggest weakness?

What new ideas do you think you can bring to this company?

Describe why you are the best candidate for this position?

Tell me about a time when you failed, and how you managed the situation.

What experience do you have working with people from backgrounds different than your own and how do you think those experiences relate to the workplace?