

GLOBAL LEARNING RETURNEE GUIDE

Welcome back to NDSU and congratulations on taking part in your program abroad! Fewer than 2% of U.S. students study abroad each year, so you have gained valuable insight into the world, savvy travel experience and, hopefully, new energy for your future. After such a significant experience, the transition back to the U.S. can be a challenge. You're coming back to what you left behind and finding what has changed, all after such a powerful transformation yourself. This guide is designed to help you transition and use your new skills as you move on to new opportunities.

TRANSCRIPTS

If you have not already done so, immediately contact your host university to request that your transcript be sent directly to the Office of International Student and Study Abroad Services. Study Abroad Services cannot request a transcript on your behalf. Until your transcript is received, 6-12 credits of "F" will show for the time you were away.

Our office will process your transcript within a few days of receipt. You will receive an automatic notification from the study abroad portal when your transcript has been attached to your account and sent to Registration and Records for processing. Processing by Registration and Records will take 1-2 months.

Once your abroad transcript has been processed by Registration and Records, your NDSU transcript will be updated to show a "P" for pass for the 12 credits of UNIV 492. The amount of transfer credits you received will appear at the top of your NDSU transcript. Classes taken abroad are treated as transfer credits and will not affect your cumulative GPA. However, your department may require a certain grade for courses taken towards your major or minor.

ISEP AND AFFILIATE PROGRAMS

Your transcript will be automatically sent to the program's central office for forwarding to NDSU Study Abroad Services. Unless your program asked you to follow site-specific procedures, usually no additional action is needed.

PARTNER EXCHANGE AND DIRECT PROGRAMS

Verify with your program administration that they have the correct address to send your transcript. Two different addresses are used, depending on the type of mail. If you are uncertain about which type of mail is used by your school, give them both so they can select appropriately.

- **When sending by express mail:**

International Student and Study Abroad Services
Dominique Speer
1401 Administration Ave MU 116
Fargo, ND 58102

- **When sending by regular mail:**

International Student and Study Abroad Services
Dominique Speer
PO Box 6050, Dept 1050
Fargo, ND 58108

COURSE EQUIVALENCY

You can use your classes from abroad to fulfill requirements back at NDSU. Here are the three main possibilities.

FREE ELECTIVE CREDITS

For credits to transfer back as free electives, you only need to complete courses abroad and make sure your transcript is sent to NDSU Study Abroad Services. Any class that is included on your transcript from the accredited institution abroad comes back as a free elective, unless it has been designated in one of the following options.

MAJOR OR MINOR REQUIREMENTS

If you would like to substitute a course abroad for a major or minor requirement at NDSU, academic departments at NDSU can sign off on the Substitute/Waive a Course Form to approve this substitution. To do this:

- Substitutions can be approved before, during, or after your program. If you complete the form any time before your transcript from abroad is received, Registration and Records will hold onto the form until your transcript is received.
- The major or minor department has the authority to approve substitutions using the Substitute/Waive a Course Form. The department may require documentation such as a syllabus to verify that the content of the course will be sufficient to replace the course at NDSU. Contact your academic advisor to ask what is needed for approval and to start the process.
- If your planned schedule changes while you are abroad, contact your academic advisor with any updates.
- Take the course abroad as planned and make any arrangements needed for your transcript from abroad to be sent to Study Abroad Services at the conclusion of the program.
- No further action is usually needed on your part. Upon receipt of the transcript from the institution abroad, Study Abroad Services will send the transcript together with any Substitute/Waive a Course Forms to the Office of Registration and Records. Registration and Records will evaluate the transcript to determine the number of credits transferred and note any course substitutions that have been approved by the appropriate departments as part of the transfer process.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Your study abroad experience itself can fulfill the general education requirements for Cultural Diversity and/or Global Perspectives, or you can use courses you take abroad to fulfill other requirements. To do this, after NDSU has received your transcript from your program abroad, complete the Appeal General Education Requirements form found on the NDSU OneStop website. The deadline for a response from the committee during a given semester is November 15 for fall and April 15 for spring. Several options apply:

- **3 credits of UNIV 492**, when completed successfully and transferred back to NDSU, will qualify for either Cultural Diversity or Global Perspectives credit. Check the box for "Study Abroad Students—Cultural Diversity or Global Perspectives" and select which of the two requirements you would like fulfilled.
- **6+ credits of UNIV 492**, when completed successfully and transferred back to NDSU, will qualify for both Cultural Diversity and Global Perspectives credit. Check the box for "Study Abroad Students—Cultural Diversity or Global Perspectives".
- **For other study abroad courses and/or general education requirements**, you must explain concisely how the proposed course will fit into the general education category description from the Undergraduate Bulletin. Check the box "Substitution of a course into a general education category" and complete the requirements listed on the form. The intention of the appeal process is for you as the student to explain how the course you took fulfills the General Education area you wish to substitute in your own words.

MAJORS

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES MAJOR

The International Studies Major (ISM) is a secondary major available to any NDSU student and is designed to internationalize your primary major. The major consists of five key components: core classes in International Studies, anthropology, political science, history, geography; elective classes with a significant international focus (most classes that you have taken abroad fulfill this requirement); foreign language proficiency equal to two years of college level instruction; completion of an international experience for a minimum of 10 weeks; and an integrative senior project.

For advising about the International Studies Major, please contact the Director of the ISM, Dr. Jeanne Hageman, Minard Hall 334, Jeanne.Hageman@ndsu.edu, 701-231-8845. Learn more at www.ndsu.edu/international/ism/.

GLOBAL BUSINESS MAJOR

This major combines global business courses with language training and an in-depth study abroad experience to qualify students for management positions in the diverse, multicultural, and global environment they will encounter in the future. It is not enough to simply learn about global business: students must be well-positioned for careers of trust and leadership in the global economy. Global Business is a secondary major, which may only be added to a primary major from the College of Business. Learn more at www.ndsu.edu/majors/globalbusiness/.



FINANCIAL AID WARNING

At the beginning of the semester following your study abroad experience, you will likely receive an email from the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships indicating that you are on "Financial Aid Warning". This is because of the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy requiring that you complete at least 66.67% of the courses that you registered for during the previous term at a 2.0 GPA. Until your transcript from abroad is received and processed it appears that you did not complete credits during that term. It is important to know this is a notice rather than a hold. It's only after two consecutive semesters of not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress that the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships starts to hold the financial aid/loans for students.

- **If you were not on Financial Aid Warning previous to your study abroad experience:** You do not need to do anything. Your aid will come in as it normally does. Once the transcript is received and processed, the warning will be removed retroactively.
- **If you were already on Financial Aid Warning previous to your study abroad experience:** You can follow the instructions on how to appeal. You only do this if you were already on Financial Aid Warning; if you haven't received this warning before, you do not need to complete this appeal. Yearlong students may need to complete an appeal if the transcript from abroad is not scheduled until late summer or early fall in order to make sure there are no problems with aid for fall semester.



REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

QUICK TIPS

Returning to the US after spending time abroad can be both exciting and frustrating. Here are a few tips to make the transition smooth:

- You might not expect to experience reverse culture shock, but most people experience it to some degree. You might not even realize that you experienced it until after it's over.
- Take your time readjusting. Don't expect to fit back into your routine immediately.
- When starting activities, think briefly about your expectations and how things might have changed. What has changed at home, school, work, or with friends? How have you changed? This may give you insight into frustrations or surprises in what seem like common activities.
- You may have already encountered the well-intentioned but difficult question: "How was your trip?" It's impossible to explain the entirety of your time away in a few sentences. Instead, think about the interests of the person asking and share one memorable event that fits.
- Keep yourself busy! There are people to see, foods to eat, places to go, and things to do. Going forward gives you a chance to appreciate what you have.



LOOKING FORWARD

With the energy and excitement you gained from study abroad, you might be thinking more about your direction in school and your life goals.

- Look at your plans for the future. How has your new perspective changed what you might want to do or where you want to do it?
- ...but don't be hasty. Take a few months to consider your options and to feel settled at home again before you change your major or finalize other significant plans. What seems like a great idea initially might not be your final decision in the long run.
- Think about incremental changes. Is there a way to refocus your current major? Is there a second major that might put things you learned abroad together with what you were already studying? Would a graduate program give you an opportunity to learn more?
- Look outside the classroom. Are there existing student groups or could you start a new one in order to share your new interests? Language or culture groups? Volunteer opportunities?
- Consider the bigger picture. Are there opportunities in the community, nationally, or online to tell your story and pursue your new interests?
- Think long term. What careers seem to fit well with your skills and interests? Internships and volunteering can give valuable insight into what a career would really be like.
- Research options. One resource to get you started is the Your International Future page at global.ndsu.edu/?go=InternationalFuture.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Sometimes returning home can be more challenging than expected. You might find things are not as you remember them or that nothing has changed from when you left. It can seem as if your home isn't as exciting as your adventure abroad was. Or, since you have new insight on viewing a culture from outside, you might start to question why and how things are done at home. Here are some ways to work toward integrating the old and the new perspectives:

- Remember that your home culture is an important part of who you are as a person. Just as you probably had frustrations in your host culture at first, you are going to see things with a different eye now that you have been away from home for a while. Integrating the two pieces of yourself will take time, so be patient with yourself and the process.
- Make a list of things at home that you enjoy and do things you couldn't do while you were away. If you were in a warm country, go skiing or sledding in the winter here. If you were in an urban environment abroad, go hiking or camping.
- Continue your spirit of adventure at home! Are there interesting places at home that you haven't visited? Activities you haven't tried? Foods you haven't tasted?
- Talk about your experiences...in moderation. Your friends and family will enjoy hearing stories and seeing photos, but they might not have the context to understand the entire experience.
- Keep reminders of your time abroad around. Hang pictures and listen to music from your host country. If someone asks about them, share why these things are important to you.
- Keep in touch with friends and (host) family members you met abroad. Technology such as Facebook, Skype, WhatsApp, Twitter, and other online resources make it easier than ever to communicate over long distances.
- Channel your nostalgia. When you want to reminisce, use the opportunity to sort your souvenirs and label your pictures. Over time, names and places will start to fade, so guard those memories for the future.
- Consider which elements of the culture where you studied you might want to keep. Are there certain foods you can cook at home, particular holiday traditions you can share with others, or clothing items you like to wear? Over time, you'll be able to find a balance between your home and host cultures. There's no one answer for how best to blend the two. Instead, it's a matter of finding what works best for you.
- If you have tried these suggestions and feel that you are still having a hard time adjusting, consider contacting the Counseling Center for more assistance. An intense study abroad experience can affect some people more than others, so you might want additional help with the adjustment process before your reverse culture shock can become depression or other health challenges. The Counseling Center is there to help.



CAREER PLANNING

WRITING A RESUME

Your resume is your first opportunity to impress a potential employer and to give you the opening for an interview. Be sure to highlight your experience studying abroad on paper and in person—you have learned many things and gained many worthwhile skills while abroad.

There are a few different ways to do so. The most common place to mention study abroad is in your “Education” section, where you can include details such as the location, length of time, practical foreign language experience, and educational subject or subjects studied. You typically wouldn’t list individual courses, but if you studied a language or took classes for

your major at an advanced level while there then be sure to highlight this. If your resume includes a “Skills” section, this is another great place to cover things you know and can do. An interests or hobbies section can add personality, but may also be seen as unprofessional depending on where you are applying.

Be sure to list any internships, volunteer, or work experience from abroad in your “Work Experience” or “Volunteer Work” section. Include specific things that you completed and accomplished during your experience. Employers want to see that your time was productive, not passive.

The NDSU Career Center website is a great resource for online resume tools and templates as you get started. Even if you have a resume already, the Career Center can help by reviewing your resume draft and conducting mock interviews. See more about writing your resume, well as interviewing tips, on the NDSU Career Center’s page: career.ndsu.edu/resources.

SKILL TYPES

When writing your resume, consider the different types of skills you have learned.

- Country-specific
- International and intercultural
- Personal
- Language
- Academic fields and major-specific
- Work or volunteer experience

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

Consider your international connections and how they might be helpful. Did you work or intern while you were abroad? If so, ask for letters of recommendation now while you are still fresh in their minds. Or if you are interested in returning to your host country to work after you graduate, ask employers, friends, and family members for suggestions and leads well before your intended graduation date so you can apply early.



SPECIFIC SKILLS THAT EMPLOYERS NEED

Because of your time abroad you...

- Understand cultural differences and similarities
- Adapt more easily to new situations
- Can communicate well
- Manage stress
- Learn quickly
- Utilize time management skills
- Solve unexpected problems
- Are self-confident and self-reliant

INTERVIEWING EFFECTIVELY

Often an interviewer will ask about your time abroad as friendly conversation and to learn more about you and your interests. You can use this as an opportunity to demonstrate the value of the experience to you and to them. Be clear and concise, and minimize using words or place names that they might find unfamiliar. Your interviewer is looking to learn what you can offer to their organization.

If your interviewer doesn't specifically ask about your time abroad, there are many ways to include your experience in answers to other questions. If asked to describe a challenge you overcame or a new situation mastered, consider the skills that you used in solving the situation and how they might apply in a work setting. How might your abilities be different from others applying for the position? By succinctly telling the story and relating it to the question you can demonstrate not only that you understand the skill but how you use it for real life challenges.

SHOWING THE VALUE OF YOUR SKILLS

When describing your time abroad, be aware that there are also some negative stereotypes associated with study abroad. An employer might not be familiar with the country where you studied, or with international travel at all. Think carefully how you present yourself and your experiences.

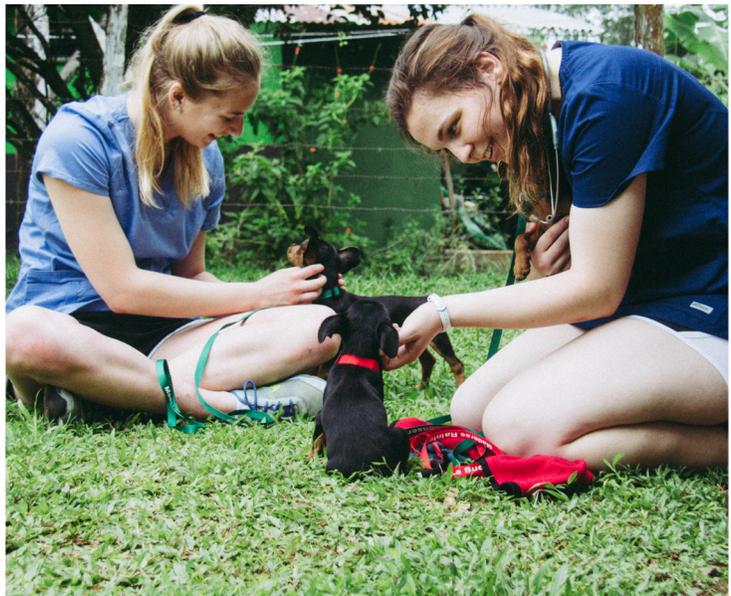
- Dress appropriately and err on the side of a conservative appearance. Wearing a bracelet or tie you bought abroad can be a great potential conversation piece, but wearing the full native dress of your old host country gives the impression that you might not fit in with the company culture.
- Unless the job you are applying for is located abroad or includes a significant portion of international travel, don't talk about wanting to live abroad again. Doing so can make potential employers wonder how long you plan to stay at their company.
- Above all, be professional and mature. An entertaining story could also give an employer the wrong impression if it includes any risky or immature behavior.
- When telling any stories, make sure they demonstrate that you have desirable skills and traits. A story about a challenge that you did not overcome or about a humorous event could easily be taken poorly if the interviewer doesn't have the background knowledge to understand the situation fully.

STAR METHOD

Behavioral questions, such as "Tell me about a time you had to be flexible", are common in interviews. Having studied abroad, you likely have excellent stories for answering these kinds of questions. Use the STAR Method to give responses in an organized and helpful way.

- **Situation:** Describe the situation. Include all necessary information about who, what, where, when, and why, but keep it as concise as possible to keep the story moving.
- **Task:** Explain what you were doing, including any challenges that were in your way.
- **Action:** Go into more detail about how you reacted to the challenge, focusing on how your actions embodied traits the hiring manager might want such as leadership, creativity, thoughtfulness, and dedication.
- **Result:** Highlight the positive things that happened as a result of your actions. Did you learn anything for next time?

When preparing for an interview, you may want to prepare stories for common behavioral question topics, including adaptability, problem solving, professionalism, time management, teamwork, communication, and motivation.



GET INVOLVED AT NDSU

JOIN BISON ABROAD

This group for returned study abroad students and those interested in studying abroad is a great way to get involved. As a new student organization, the Bison Abroad are open to new ideas. Help out students who are looking to study abroad, get together with other returnees, raise money for a scholarship, or think of something new. Learn more or join by contacting the Bison Abroad student group at nds.bisonabroad@nds.edu.

BE A PEER MENTOR

Every summer, Study Abroad Services looks for returnee students to be Peer Mentors in our office. Talk with students who are interested in learning about study abroad, share your story, and get paid. Watch your email for the call for applications in the spring if you are interested in applying for this rewarding campus job.

VOLUNTEER FOR STUDY ABROAD SERVICES

Being a volunteer gives you the opportunity to be involved in a wide variety of activities, such as the Study Abroad Fair, classroom visits, pre-departure orientation, and contact tables. If you are interested in taking part, let your study abroad advisor know. Study Abroad Services also sends out periodic emails looking for volunteers for events and program contacts.

TIMELINE

RETURNING

1-3 months after

- Obtain any needed post-approvals for courses
- Verify transcript received
- Update resume to include skills learned abroad
- Get involved on campus and in the community
- Plan for your future