



Alumni Re-Entry Resource Packet



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Welcome home Gilman scholar! The U.S. Department of State, the Institute of International Education and the Gilman International Scholarship Program hope your experience abroad was beneficial to your academic, professional and personal goals. We have produced this document to help you stay engaged with us and use the resources below as you adjust to being back home in the U.S.

Please check the Gilman website at www.iie.org/gilman including live webinars schedule, and explore the resources for alumni.

Gilman scholars can contact the program by emailing gilman_scholars@iie.org with any questions or updates.

What is Re-Entry?

Re-Entry is an emotional and psychological stage of re-adjustment, similar to your initial adjustments to living abroad. When experiencing re-entry, it is important to keep in mind the following:

- You may have an idealized view of home.
- Things may have changed (i.e. the lives of your friends).
- “Reverse Culture Shock” may happen – you feel like no one understands you or you may be alarmed that you will lose part of your identity if you do not have an outlet to pursue interests that were sparked abroad.

The degree of shock experienced by each traveler may range from a jolt to an uncomfortable agitation. There are a number of factors that may determine how you adjust:

- The length of time you were away,
- Previous abroad experience,
- Level of contact with friends and/or family at home,
and/or
- Whether you enjoyed your time abroad.



Re-Entry Questions for Reflection

Processing through the ways you have grown from your time abroad is key to a successful re-entry. We encourage you to answer these questions that will help you reflect and adjust through your re-entry process:

- How have you changed during your time abroad?
- How might your friends have changed while you were away?
- What are some of the most significant experiences that you would like to share with your friends at home?
- What has been the most challenging part of returning home? What has been good about your return?
- How will you keep in touch with friends, professors, members of the community and others that you met while abroad?
- What did you learn about yourself from your experience abroad?
- Has your experience inspired you personally, professionally or academically?
If so, can you use these outlets for a new goal or project?



Integrate Abroad Experience into Your Career Search

We recommend using your time abroad as a lynchpin for future career and academic endeavors. Brainstorm and/or complete a self-evaluation (next page) to decipher what skills and competencies you gained while abroad. For example, did you gain time-management skills because of your large course load or internship? Did you develop critical thinking skills and strength in handling unpredictable and unfamiliar situations through your experience abroad? Articulating transferable professional and academic skills into your career search can be challenging. However, the following pages will further outline tips to help you successfully integrate your experience into your cover letters, résumés and interviews.

Identification and application of the professional skills that you developed while abroad is a key way to integrate your international experience with life in the U.S. The following list describes only some of the many applicable skills that you may have gained while abroad:

- Adaptability and flexibility
- Functioning outside of comfort zone
- Communicating despite obstacles
- Handling challenging situations respectfully
- Operating with a high level of ambiguity
- Taking direction and leading others
- Managing time and resources
- Identifying and solving problems with limited tools
- Understanding non-verbal cues
- Cross-cultural sensitivity and empathy
- Linguistic capabilities
- Appreciation for diversity and varying perspectives

For more resources on how to leverage your study abroad experience in your career search, see the resources section on page 12.

“As we all know, we now live in a global world in a global job market and I think you would be hard pressed to find a company that does not have international interests. I think it’s important to put the fact that you have these language skills very prominently on your application to get that hiring manager’s attention.”

***Sara Rasenack
Gilman Alumni Ambassador, Germany, 2002-2003***



We recommend using a **SELF-ASSESSMENT**, which will help you reflect on the many transferable skills gained while abroad. Below is a checklist of skills returnees may gain while abroad. Check off what applies to you.

SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adapt to new environments | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify career objectives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handle difficult situations | <input type="checkbox"/> Lead others in formal and/or informal groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Take initiative; be confident in skills and ideas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Function with a high level of ambiguity | <input type="checkbox"/> Handle difficult situations diplomatically |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manage time and prioritize tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> Be self-reliant and function independently |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate effectively (written and oral) | <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis management: identify problems and utilize available (often limited) resources to solve problems (quickly) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct research despite language and cultural differences | <input type="checkbox"/> Work as part of a team (often with members with different perspectives and approaches) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gain foreign language skills/proficiency | <input type="checkbox"/> Approach issues with tolerance, open-mindedness, and cultural sensitivity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understand a different culture (includes an organization's culture) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop intercultural awareness | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate despite language barriers | |

QUALITIES

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Sensitivity/Awareness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Inquisitiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-reliance | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-confidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciation of diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-knowledge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerance/Open-mindedness | <input type="checkbox"/> Perseverance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assertiveness | |

SKILLS SURVEY

The following pages are an example of a survey that can be used to evaluate your skills upon re-entry in order to help you become more aware of ways that you may have changed as a result of studying abroad. Evaluate your skill levels before and after studying abroad (1 = lowest and 10 = highest). Once you have completed the survey, take a moment to reflect on examples or instances from your experience abroad that contributed to your skills evolution.



ANALYSIS & PROBLEM SOLVING

Capacity to ask for and receive help from others

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Willingness to confront problems and look for alternative solutions

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ability to listen and observe carefully

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ability to think critically

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

INTEGRATIVE & ADAPTIVE SKILLS

Experience and capability in balancing two or more cultures

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Awareness of values and lifestyles in the United States

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ability to interact with and relate to many different people

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Source: Levinger, Morrison, & Jouannelle. *Beyond "It was awesome!" Enriching the Student Experience after Re-entry.* CIEE 2011 Annual Conference, New Orleans. http://www.ciee.org/conference/downloads/past/new-orleans/skills_survey.pdf

Aptitude to perceive things from another person's point of view

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

COMMUNICATION/LANGUAGE SKILLS *(in foreign language, if applicable)*

Oral Proficiency

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Written Expression

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ability to listen and observe carefully Listening and comprehension skills

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

OPENNESS

Ability to compromise and be flexible

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Tolerance for differences

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Openness to new experiences and activities

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Awareness and respect for beliefs of others

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

RESILIENCE

Patience and adaptability

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ability to keep a sense of humor in stressful situations

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Capacity to deal with failure

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Strength in handling unpredictable and unfamiliar situations

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

CONFIDENCE

Ease in establishing relationships with people from a different culture

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Willingness to take risks

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Self-sufficiency

Before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



Cover Letters

Undergraduates must also be prepared to describe how their transferable skills from abroad can be applied to a potential position or field. You may choose to work with your Study Abroad advisor or Career Services department to produce a cover letter that will highlight your experience abroad.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

March 3, 2016

Name of Individual
Title
Company
Company Address

Dear Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms.:

Avoid using "To whom it may concern." Research to find out the appropriate person to address.

Show interest in the position and succinctly articulate why you are the best fit for the company/organization. Include details about why you chose this specific company/organization.

I would like to apply for the International Finance position with Bank of America. I am uniquely qualified to excel in this position with my background in finance, experience handling investments, and knowledge of Chinese business operations. Bank of America has built outstanding relationships with multinational businesses and I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to help enhance the global reach of the company.

This May, I will be graduating from Elon University with a degree in Finance and a minor in International Business. Last summer, I held an internship with Wachovia Securities, which fostered my analytical skills and gave me an in-depth understanding of handling investments. My experience studying abroad in China provided me with a cross-cultural perspective on business and finance. Learning first-hand about the expanding Chinese market awarded me invaluable expertise in this area and I would like to use this knowledge to help improve Bank of America's financial interactions with Asia. As an International Financial Analyst, I would use my enthusiasm for international business to help enhance your global reach.

Describe qualifications & skills for the position that match the job description. Cite transferable skills from abroad & use examples.

My subject knowledge as well as my ability to adapt to changing environments will make for a smooth transition from the classroom to a corporate setting in the U.S. and abroad. In addition to my education and work experience, I have many skills that will enable me to be an excellent addition to Bank of America. I am efficient at problem solving, cross-cultural communication, and I am self-reliant. My internship with Wachovia Securities and my academic experience in China taught me how to multi-task and work independently.

I am interested in learning more about this position. I am available to interview at your convenience. I can be reached at (336) 555-4076. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Close the letter, noting confidence in their response. Show gratitude for the consideration.

Margot A. Broad
123 Phoenix Lane
Elon, NC 27233
(336) 555-4076
marGoAbroad@gmail.com



Résumés

A résumé should effectively communicate why an applicant is an ideal candidate for a specific position or field. We recommend that you add your transferable skills and knowledge gained from studying or interning abroad to your résumé in order to show why you would be a valuable employee.

If your program was primarily academic, we advise that you list the program information under the **education section**. If the program abroad entailed an experiential learning component, such as an internship, work experience or volunteer opportunity, this can be listed under **experience**. You may also choose to list leadership achievements, honors and skills developed abroad under the appropriate headings. (*Sample résumé on the following page.*)

Education section

- Name of university, city and country of program
- Term of enrollment (i.e. Spring 2017)
- Description of program to highlight the academic, professional, and personal impact
- Coursework that is relevant to the position or graduate program

Experience section

- Experiential education abroad components and achievements can be listed under experience, i.e. internships, independent research, service-learning

Skills

- List foreign language acquisition and level
- Add any further abilities acquired from experience abroad

Additional Heading Options

- Separate “*International Experience*” section can be added to highlight experiences abroad
- Additional “*Leadership*” section can include any leadership opportunities from abroad or at your home institution
- Honors and scholarships (such as the Gilman Scholarship or Fulbright Grant) may be listed under “*Honors and Awards*” or added to the education section
- A statement of purpose or goal at the top of your résumé can be added to briefly summarize and preface your experiences in an “elevator speech” format.

Focus on what you achieved

- Use action verbs, describe tasks or situations and highlight the impact
- Example for an Editor-in-Chief of a university newspaper: “*Managed volunteer submissions, provided topic guidance and compiled and reviewed over 20 articles per week, increasing campus readership by 45%*”

Tailor your résumé to fit job descriptions

- Analyze a job description and highlight background and experiences that are pertinent to the position
- Refer to job descriptions and use the organization’s terms when describing your responsibilities and accomplishments



Interviews

Once you have been able to identify transferable skills that you want to highlight, you can also practice answering mock interview questions by using the S.T.A.R. approach (acronym for Situation, Task, Actions, and Results). This will help you come up with specific examples to show how your skills and experiences will translate into the professional world.

Situation: Describe the backstory to a challenge you have overcome.

Task: What was your exact role or responsibility in this situation? What was your end goal?

Action: Explain the sequence of actions and thought process to how you dealt with this challenge. Why did you choose this method?

Results: Summarize the tangible results and impact of your work and decisions. How were things better off because of your input? Use a high level of detail and concrete evidence to show the full impact of your initiatives.

Below are a few examples of interview prompts that can guide you in preparation for interviews. Many of these can be answered by giving examples from experiences abroad:

- Tell me about a time that you had to adapt to a difficult situation. How did you handle this challenge?
- How has your education prepared you for this job?
- What accomplishment has given you the greatest satisfaction?
- What is the toughest challenge you have faced? How did you overcome this challenge?
- Can you work independently and take risks? Give an example.
- Tell me about a time when you were flexible and adaptable to a rapidly changing situation.
- Describe a situation where you had to work under pressure. Were you successful?
- What motivates you to put forth your best effort? Give an example.
- Why did you decide to study or intern abroad? What did you gain from the experience?
- Tell me about a time that you worked with someone you disliked and how you managed this situation.
- Describe a time when you had to juggle multiple projects and deadlines at the same time. How did you manage these projects?
- Give an example of a time that you contributed to an ethnically diverse team.
- Tell me about a time that you worked with someone who did not share your communication style. How did you handle this situation?

Gilman Scholar Re-Entry and Career Resources

[International Exchange Alumni:](#)

An exclusive website that offers alumni of U.S. government exchange programs opportunities to continue their exchange experience after returning from abroad.

[Gilman Alumni LinkedIn Group:](#)

Through this private group, Gilman alumni and current scholars can share stories, discussions, and academic and professional opportunities with one another. The Gilman Program often posts opportunities that may be of interest to alumni.

[Gilman Alumni Newsletters:](#)

These bi-monthly newsletters contain updates, opportunities and feature alumni accomplishing great things at home and abroad.

[Gilman Alumni Ambassador Program:](#)

This diverse group of Gilman alumni are trained to be official ambassadors of Gilman by providing presentations and promotional outreach to university and college campuses around the nation. This is a great way to inspire others to seek a study abroad experience of their own, and also develop career skills and experience.

Helpful Articles:

Anjarwalla, Tas. [“Dealing with reverse culture shock.”](#) *CNN*.

Citron and Mendelson. [“Relationships Roots and Unpacking.”](#) *Transition Abroad Magazine*.

Fischer, Jake. [“Re-Entry: Returning Home from Study Abroad.”](#) *Huffington Post*.

Kruvelis, Melanie. [“How to fight the post-abroad blues.”](#) *USA TODAY*.

Berdan, Goodman and Taylor. “Chapter 9: Transitioning Back to Life in the States” *A Student Guide to Study Abroad*

Hachey, Jean-Marc. ["Marketing Study Abroad"](#)

Recent Webinar Recordings:

[Re-Entry for Gilman Alumni](#)

[Extending Your Exchange Experience with the State Department](#)

[Extending Your Exchange Experience with the Peace Corps](#)

[Advice for Fulbright U.S. Student Program Applicants](#)

[Leveraging Your Study Abroad Experience in Your Job Search](#)

[Networking and Maximizing Gilman Alumni Connections](#)

[Getting Involved: Taking Global Local](#)

[International Fellowship Opportunities](#)

[Getting the Most Out of Your LinkedIn Profile](#)

[Careers in International Education](#)

Get Further Engaged in International Education

[U.S. Department of State](#) – visit the U.S. Department of State’s website to learn more about the various employment opportunities.

[U.S. Fulbright Program](#) - Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, Fulbright is the largest U.S. international exchange program offering opportunities for post-baccalaureate students, scholars and professionals to undertake international graduate study, advanced research, university teaching, and teaching in elementary and secondary schools worldwide.

[Language Flagship Program](#) - Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, these intensive language instruction programs for undergraduate and graduate students enhance academic degrees through language proficiency and cultural competence.

[Boren Scholarships & Fellowships](#) - Funding from the National Security Educational Program (NSEP) supports U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to study less commonly taught languages in world regions critical to U.S. interests: Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

[The Critical Language Scholarship Program](#) – Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, the Critical Language Scholarship Program offers intensive overseas summer language institutes in thirteen critical foreign languages.

[Institute of International Education](#) – IIE administers over 200 programs for students, scholars and professionals to participate in some type of international exchange. IIE has 5 regional offices in the U.S. and 18 international offices.

[NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#) – NAFSA is one of the leading professional associations promoting the exchange of students and scholars. Visit NAFSA’s website and career center.

[Forum on Education Abroad](#) – The Forum is an organization whose exclusive purpose is to serve the field of education abroad.

[Generation Study Abroad](#) – This IIE initiative seeks to double the number of Americans who study abroad by 2019. Through Generation Study Abroad, IIE hopes that every high school and college student will think of study abroad as an essential part of their college education.