



RE-ENTRY GUIDE

Welcome back and congratulations on completing your experience abroad! Re-entry can be both an exciting and confusing time. This guide is intended to help with some of the common questions and to offer some direction for thinking about the future.

Transcripts & Course Equivalency • Reverse Culture Shock
Get Involved • Resume & Interviews • Other Resources

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 Programs. The OIP cannot request a transcript on your behalf. Until your transcript is received, you will show 6-12 credits of "F" for the time you were away.

If transcript is sent by
express mail
use this address:

International Programs
Study Abroad
1401 Administration Ave MU 116
Fargo, ND 58102

If transcript is sent by
regular mail
use this address:

International Programs
Study Abroad
PO Box 6050, Dept. 4620
Fargo, ND 58108

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 and 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.

course equivalency

If you did not pre-arrange for courses to be approved towards your major, minor or general education requirements using a Course Plan, you can still request to have them approved upon return. To have courses approved towards your major or minor, work with your advisor to complete a "Substitute/Waive a Course" form.

Complete the "Appeal General Education Requirements" form to request that a course fulfill general education requirements. As part of this process, you must supply documentation of what you learned in the class *and* you must provide an explanation as to how the proposed course "satisfies" the general education category description. It is very important that you show understanding as to why this course satisfies the requirement.

Both of these forms are available on Bison Connection at www.ndsu.edu/bisonconnection/forms/.

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 keep the transition smooth:

- You might not expect to experience reverse culture shock, but most people experience at least some. You might not realize that you experienced it until after it's over.
- First, take your time readjusting. Don't expect to fit back into your routine immediately.
- Before starting any activity, 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?
- You may have already encountered the well-intentioned but difficult question: "How was your trip?" It's nearly 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.

- Think about all of 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 group or could you start a new one that would 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.

the best of both worlds

Sometimes returning home can be more challenging than expected. You might find that 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 on 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.
- 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, 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 that 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 you!

GET INVOLVED

global ambassador

A global ambassador is a student who has studied abroad and wants to share his/her experiences with others as well as help with NDSU study abroad events.

benefits of being a global ambassador

1. There are many benefits to being a global ambassador. One of the main benefits is that you will be able to share your experiences with others who actually want to hear about your time abroad!
2. Being a global ambassador looks great on a resume! Along with your international experience, volunteering as a global ambassador will show future employers that you are interested in getting involved.
3. Being a global ambassador is fun! The NDSU Office of International Programs does activities throughout the year to promote international and study abroad programs. We are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join our team and help create awareness for international education.

global ambassador opportunities

Being a global ambassador doesn't mean that you have to give all your extra time to study abroad, but we do prefer that if you commit to being a global ambassador that you fulfill that commitment, interning a minimum of 10 hours per semester. A global ambassador can choose different levels of involvement from a wide variety of activities. Global ambassador opportunities include:

- **Class Visits** — Going into NDSU classes and explaining the 'basics' of study abroad. You will receive training about other study abroad programs before doing class visits. (1/2 hour per visit)
- **Pre-Departure Orientation** — Sharing information about your study abroad experiences with students before they go overseas. (1 hour)
- **Memorial Union Contact Tables** — Staffing study abroad contact tables, answering questions and sharing your experiences. (1 hour shifts)
- **Study Abroad Fair** — Helping with setting up and staffing information tables, as well as sharing your experiences with students. (Mid-September and early-February, 10am-2pm for 1 hour shifts)
- **Creative Partner** — Helping design office window displays, brochures, or flyers.
- **Facebook Contribution** — Sharing your study abroad experiences with others by contributing to the dialogue on Facebook and submitting your stories and photos.
- **Email Contact** — Allowing students to contact you regarding questions they have about study abroad and your experiences. You can make yourself available as an alumni of the program to applicants or accepted students by logging into www.ndsu.edu/international/studyabroad.

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. Upon graduation, you will have a double major in your primary major and in International Studies. 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 a proposal and an integrative senior project.

To declare an ISM major you must have a minimum 2.5 GPA, be at least sophomore standing (27 credits minimum), have completed the first year foreign language proficiency (or equivalent) and have already declared your primary major and have completed at least 3 credits in that major.

Declaration forms are available on the Bison Connection website under “Forms”. For advising about the International Studies Major, please contact the Director of the ISM, Dr. Thomas Ambrosio, Criminal Justice and Public Policy Building 116, Thomas.Ambrosio@ndsu.edu, 701-231-7097.

intercultural organizations

- African Student Union
- Arabic Student Association
- Association of Students from India
- Bangladeshi Student Organization
- Bison Herald/Korean Association
- Enjoy Korea! - Language and cultural lessons
- HOLA (Hispanic Organization of Latin Americans)
- International Student Association (ISA)
- Japanese Student Association
- Korean Student Association
- Malaysian Students Association
- Mongolian Student Association
- Muslim Student Association
- Nepalese Student Association (Chautaree)
- Persian Student Association
- Saudi Student Association
- Sri Lankan Student Association
- Union of Chinese Students and Scholars

For contact information, check out www.ndsu.edu/international/student_associations/.

YOUR FUTURE

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. Don’t list specific classes, but if you studied a language or took classes for your major at an advanced level while there then be sure to highlight it. If your resume includes a “Skills” section, this is another great place to cover things you know and can do.

skill types

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

- Country-specific
- International and intercultural
- Personal
- Languages
- Academic fields and major-specific
- Work experience

Be sure to list any internships, volunteer, or work experience from abroad either 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 is a great resource for resume tools and templates online 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 on the NDSU Career Center’s page: www.ndsu.edu/career/students/resumes_letters/.

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 after you graduate, ask employers, friends, and family members for suggestions and leads well before your intended graduation date so you can apply early.

interviewing

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 not have heard before. 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.

More helpful tips on interviews, visit the NDSU Career Center at www.ndsu.edu/career/students/interviews/.

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

demonstrating 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 at the company.
- 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.
- If you do tell any stories, make sure they demonstrate that you have desirable skills and traits. Telling a story about a challenge that you did *not* overcome could easily be taken poorly if the interviewer doesn't have the background knowledge to understand the situation fully.

OTHER RESOURCES

online

Middlebury International Study Abroad: Re-Entry Resources

http://www.middlebury.edu/international/sa/returning/reentry_resources

TransitionsAbroad.com: Relationships, Roots and Unpacking

http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0507/coming_home_from_study_abroad.shtml

Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook

http://multimedia.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/library/T0087_culturematters.pdf

The Center for Global Education Study Abroad Handbook

<http://www.studentsabroad.com/reentrycultureshock.html>

books and articles

Paige, R. Michael, Andrew D. Cohen, Barbara Kappler, Julie C. Chi and James P.

Lassegard. Maximizing Study Abroad: A Student's Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 2002.

Newbold, Gail. Coming home again: absorbing return shock. Brigham Young University, Center for International and Area Studies Pub. Services, 1980.

Hachey, Jean-Marc. Marketing Study Abroad. Transitions Abroad. Fall, 2006, p. 22-25.

<http://www.transitionsabroad.com>.



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