

LIFE AFTER STUDY ABROAD

A guidebook to help you get the most out of your abroad experience.



PREPARED BY THE
OFFICE OF PROGRAMS ABROAD
UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION
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WELCOME BACK

The Office of Programs Abroad realizes that the transition back to Tufts after studying abroad is not always easy: you undoubtedly have changed from your overseas experience and you may find differences in your friends and family. Additionally, you may feel a bit out of sorts as you try to cope with busy course loads, making new friends and reconnecting with old ones, getting involved in extra-curricular activities, and becoming reacquainted with life in the States. This is completely normal and has been referred to as “re-entry shock” or “reverse culture shock.”

We hope that this re-orientation guide will help you integrate your experience abroad into life at Tufts as well as your life beyond Tufts.

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ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

While the Office of Programs Abroad realizes that you may be overwhelmed as you try to readjust to life at Tufts and renew old friendships, we ask that you make sure you have completed all the necessary administrative procedures so that your credit transfers.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

Non-Tufts Programs:

Students who studied on *Non-Tufts programs* must receive approval from the appropriate departmental transfer credit representatives for all courses that were taken abroad. If there are any courses appearing on your transcript for which you have not yet received approval, your transfer credits will not be processed; please log into SIS at <http://go.tufts.edu/sis> and submit transfer-credit requests for all courses that will appear on your study-abroad transcript. In addition, make sure to have the official transcript sent to the Student Services Desk in Dowling Hall. You may read more about transfer-credit policies and the approval process here: <https://students.tufts.edu/registrar/what-we-assist/transfer-credit>

Tufts Programs Abroad:

It is unnecessary for students on Tufts Programs Abroad to seek transfer-credit approval, as their courses will automatically count as Tufts credits. However, if you wish for a course taken abroad to be approved as either a direct course equivalent or as major credit, you may request “course-equivalency” approval through SIS.

PETITION FOR WORLD CIVILIZATION, FOREIGN CULTURE AND LANGUAGE, AND DISTRIBUTION CREDIT

If you took a course that you wish to count towards world civilization, foreign culture and language, or distribution credit, you may need to submit a petition. If you had a course approved as a direct equivalent of a course offered at Tufts then you may use that course to fulfill requirements in the same way that the Tufts course would count.

In addition, any course approved as the following may be counted towards distribution requirements.

Courses approved as:

Art and Art History
Astronomy
Chemistry
Computer Science
Drama & Dance*
History
Music

Will count towards:

Arts
Natural Science
Natural Science
Mathematical Science
Arts
Humanities or Social Science
Arts

Physics

Political Science

Religion

Natural Science

Social Science

Humanities

For other courses, the transfer credit representative will determine the distribution area at the same time the course is approved online for transfer credit. Make sure you petition the department as soon as you return to campus **so that you will graduate on time.**

****Please note: Dance performance and Music performance courses are ineligible for transfer credit.***

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

In order for the Office of Programs Abroad to ensure that future students have a successful time abroad, we need to hear from you! Please tell us about your experience and what you thought of your study-abroad program. This information helps us evaluate and approve programs and also provides valuable information for other students as they research and select a program. Please follow the link to the Qualtrics evaluation survey that we provided via email to share your feedback.

GET INVOLVED!

If you want to help prospective students figure out their study-abroad plans, please either fill out the “Get Involved” Qualtrics survey that we provided via email or simply send an email to melanie.armstrong@tufts.edu, indicating your desire to assist with our programming. Throughout the year, we need periodic help with the study abroad fair, program-specific information meetings, study-abroad panels, pre-departure meetings, etc.

Also, if you have any photos you are willing to share for use in the printed brochures and/or the Office of Programs Abroad website, please contact melanie.armstrong@tufts.edu. Please include your name, program, and a short caption describing where the photo was taken and/or the activity depicted so that photo credits can be accurately noted in the publications.

See pp. 5 – 7 for more ideas on how to get involved in activities all over campus.

PERSONAL CARE

RE-ENTRY “CULTURE SHOCK”

It is very common for students to experience re-entry or reverse culture shock. Often students describe feeling that the friends they left behind do not understand them or that they don't have a way to maintain new interests that they developed abroad. You may experience one or more of the following:

Feeling overwhelmed

Boredom

Restlessness

Depression

Uncertainty

Isolation



Reverse homesickness: missing host families, friends or places in your host country

Negativity toward the U.S. or American behavior

Redirection of goals or priorities

Reverse culture shock often mirrors what you felt when you first went abroad. It is normal to need time to adjust to coming home. To cope with re-entry:

- Get involved in activities that you enjoy.
- Find ways to integrate your new interests and skills into your life at Tufts (i.e. participate in the International Center's Intercultural Conversation Program).
- Identify other students who went abroad who understand what you are feeling.
- Be patient with yourself. It is normal to experience some form of reverse culture shock.

More information on Reverse Culture Shock can be found here:

<http://www.studentsabroad.com/handbook/reverse-culture-shock.php?country=General>

MENTAL HEALTH

You may want to talk to someone besides your friends if you are experiencing stress or having a hard time readjusting to life in the States. The staff at the Counseling and Mental Health Service, located at 120 Curtis Street, 617-627-3360, is available to listen. Some students find it beneficial to go to the Counseling and Mental Health Service just once while others may want a more on-going arrangement. Whatever you prefer, the Counseling and Mental Health Service is there for you.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Experiencing a cold, diarrhea, or the flu? Upon returning home some students do fall ill. If you are ill or returning from a developing country, you will want to schedule a checkup with your doctor at home or with Tufts Health Service. Be sure to tell your doctor the locations where you lived and/or traveled abroad.

INTEGRATING YOUR STUDY-ABROAD EXPERIENCE WITH LIFE AT TUFTS

Through the experience of studying abroad, you have gained new knowledge, perspectives, and expertise, all of which can be applied to life back here on campus. Your new skill set is not only invaluable to your continued academic and personal growth, but can also enrich your involvement with the Tufts community. Our office welcomes the help of returned students in a variety of our programming throughout the year:

- **STUDY ABROAD FAIR:** Every September, Tufts holds a study abroad fair where representatives from various programs are invited to talk with students about going abroad. If you are interested in answering questions or helping the Office of Programs Abroad set up the fair, please indicate as much on the “Get Involved” survey or contact melanie.armstrong@tufts.edu
- **WORK-STUDY IN THE OFFICE OF PROGRAMS ABROAD:** Each year the Office of Programs Abroad hires two or three student employees. Part of the job includes helping others through the study-abroad process. If you are interested, please contact the Office of Programs Abroad, 617-627-3282 at the beginning of the academic year. To be eligible, you must receive federal work-study.
- **RECRUITMENT MEETINGS:** Each fall the Office of Programs Abroad conducts information meetings/pizza parties to recruit students for Tufts Programs Abroad. We need alumni from the various programs to give the student perspective and share their experiences on the Tufts programs. If you went on a Tufts Program, we will be contacting you during the year for your help.
- **PEER ADVISING:** Many students feel overwhelmed as they try to decide on a study abroad program. If you are willing to be a resource for students planning to go abroad, please indicate that on the “Get Involved” survey and make sure to include your contact information and the specific or general areas on which you could offer advice.
- **PRE-DEPARTURE MEETINGS:** At the end of each semester the Office of Programs Abroad conducts pre-departure meetings for those going abroad on both Tufts and non-Tufts programs. We need recently-returned students to speak about their experiences abroad and answer questions that departing students may have. If you are interested in helping, please contact melanie.armstrong@tufts.edu and/or indicate your interest on the “Get Involved” survey.

Other ways to capitalize on your study-abroad experience are available across campus:

- **CULTURE HOUSES:** The Office of Residential Life offers Special Interest Houses with a cultural focus (Africana, Jewish, Muslim, Latino, Asian-American, Russian, and International) and language houses (Chinese, French, Spanish, German, and Japanese). The houses are open to all students interested in these languages and cultures and are not limited to majors. They offer small-group living with an opportunity to enjoy an intensive culture or language experience, often with native speakers. Residents participate in many social and cultural events. For further information see <http://ase.tufts.edu/reslife/housing/special.asp> or contact the Office of Residential Life, South Hall, at 617-627-3248 or the International Center at 617-627-3458.
- **COFFEE HOURS:** Maintain the language skills you developed abroad by participating in one of the coffee hours that are arranged through the language departments. For dates and times, please contact the appropriate language department.
- **GET INVOLVED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER:** Remember how it felt when you first arrived overseas? Why not help international students settle in to life at Tufts? Opportunities range from being a volunteer to a leader. Students interested in fulfilling work-study, helping with International Orientation, or serving as a volunteer at the International Center should contact them at 617-627-3458.
- **INTERNATIONAL CLUB (I-CLUB):** The I-Club is dedicated to promoting intercultural understanding and exchange throughout the Tufts community. The I-Club plans events such as barbecues, semi-formal dances, film series, etc. For more information, please visit <http://ase.tufts.edu/icenter/programs/i-club.asp>.
- **OTHER CAMPUS CLUBS:** There are many clubs on campus that focus on particular cultures or languages: African Student Organization, Association of Latin American Students, Association of South Asians, Caribbean Student Organization, Chinese Students Association, German Club, Hong Kong Students Association, Indian Society at Tufts, Italian Club, Japanese Culture Club, Korean Student Association, La Société Française, Pan-African Alliance, Russian and Slavic Student Association, Taiwanese Association of Students at Tufts, Thai Student Association, Turkish Alliance, Vietnamese Students Club ...and more. What better way to maintain your language skills and meet people who have cultural ties to where you studied abroad? The full list of student clubs can be found at <http://ocl.tufts.edu/list/>.

APPLYING THE STUDY-ABROAD EXPERIENCE TO LIFE AFTER TUFTS

HOW TO MARKET YOUR EXPERIENCE TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Throughout your experience abroad, whether you realized it or not, you were likely acquiring and honing a variety of skills that are incredibly valuable, both in everyday life and in the workplace. Beyond the obvious ‘hard’ skills like linguistic fluency or other applied skills you may have acquired through coursework or internships, you no doubt cultivated a whole host of ‘soft’ skills that are equally, if not more, impressive when highlighted in your job search. These skills include but are not limited to:

- Interacting and coming to consensus with people who hold different cultural perspectives;
- Being flexible and adapting to change/uncertainty;
- Ability to work under pressure, think strategically, and problem solve in the face of complex and unanticipated situations;
- Gaining new knowledge from hands-on, lived experience;
- Increased independence, self-motivation, and confidence;
- Undertaking tasks that are unfamiliar and taking calculated risks.

There can be a temptation to describe the study-abroad experience in very general terms, characterizing it simply as ‘great’ or ‘life-changing.’ However, as you update your résumé and practice your interviewing skills, it is useful to identify ways in which you can be specific about *why* the experience was great and how you became a more robust and capable person as a result of your time abroad. Be sure to include your study-abroad experience on your résumé and give some thought to specific scenarios you encountered abroad that might highlight one or more of the above skills; be prepared to provide details regarding what happened, how you dealt with the situation, and what you learned as a result. Being able to discuss your study-abroad experience and the skills you gained from it in concrete and specific terms will help you stand out from the crowd in your job search.

Additional resources:

- Tufts Career Center: <http://students.tufts.edu/career-center>
- IIE’s “Why Study Abroad?”: <http://www.iie.org/Programs/Generation-Study-Abroad/About/Why-Study-Abroad#.V6joRvkrLcs>
- The British Council’s research on “Culture at Work”: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/press/global-research-reveals-value-intercultural-skills>
- StudyAbroad.com’s “Effective Marketing of Your Study Abroad Experience to Employers”: <http://www.studyabroad.com/articles/effective-marketing-of-your-study-abroad-experience-to-employers>
- TransitionsAbroad.com’s “How to Sell Your Overseas Experience to Employers”: http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/studyabroadmagazine/2006Fall/marketing_your_study_abroad.shtml

GRADUATE STUDY ABROAD

Those interested in pursuing a graduate degree overseas may consult www.studyabroad.com or <http://www.gradschools.com/program-types/graduate-schools-by-country> for information about opportunities. Need funding for your graduate work abroad? Perhaps one of the scholarships listed below would help.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

There are a variety of scholarships available for graduate study or research abroad. For information on such scholarships, please visit <http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/scholar-development> and/or contact Dr. Anne Moore, Scholar Development Specialist, in Undergraduate Education, Dowling Hall.

WORK AND INTERNSHIPS ABROAD*

- International job and internship information is available at <http://www.goinglobal.com>
- *Transitions Abroad* has directories of work abroad and internship opportunities. <http://www.transitionsabroad.com>
- BUNAC facilitates work programs in a number of countries around the world. <http://www.bunac.org.uk>
- IAESTE provides paid-internships in 63 different countries for students who majored in engineering or science. <http://www.iaeste.org>
- The Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET) provides paid opportunities to teach English in Japan. <http://www.jetprogramme.org/en>
- The Riley Guide: <http://www.rileyguide.com/internat.html>
- More useful links:
 - <http://www.goabroad.com/>
 - <http://wwwoof.net/>

VOLUNTEER and SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES*

There are many programs which need volunteers to work overseas. Here is a sampling of volunteer organizations online:

- Volunteer for Peace: <http://www.vfp.org>
- I-to-I: <http://www.i-to-i.com>
- Peace Corps: <http://www.peacecorps.gov>
- Service Civil International: <http://www.sci.ngo>
- Institute for International Cooperation and Development: <http://www.iicd-volunteer.org>

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD*

Go Overseas Teach Abroad: <http://www.gooverseas.com/teach-abroad>

CIEE Teach Abroad: <http://www.ciee.org/teach/>

WorldTeach Inc.: <http://www.worldteach.org>

Projects Abroad: <http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/>

The Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET): <http://www.jetprogramme.org/en>

TEFL International: <http://www.teflife.com/>

Dave's ESL Café: <http://www.eslcafe.com/joblist/>

* These organizations have not been vetted by Tufts Programs Abroad, so we recommend that you do some of your own research on external resources/organizations and their offerings.