Featuring Study Abroad in your Cover Letters

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Every employer is looking for something different, and every applicant brings something unique to the table.  How do you stand out among the crowd?

Including a few sentences about study abroad in your cover letter can be a great way to demonstrate your knowledge of the world and capture a reader’s attention.  Study abroad is such a multi-faceted experience; however, picking just a few points to focus on can be overwhelming.  So what do potential employers find the most relevant?

**Specific examples**

Unfortunately, there is no one right answer.  The best thing you can do is consider the company and position you are applying for and focus on whatever experiences relate best.  If you can, use specific examples and explain what exactly it is that you gained from your time abroad.

For instance, if you are applying for a job on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, you would definitely want to mention an internship with a Member of Parliament (MP) in London.  You could try to pull specific examples by saying something like:

*During my semester in London, I gained a unique perspective on the British governmental system by interning with MP Rosie Cooper.   I was lucky enough to sit in on some of her daily meetings, including a conference with the United States Ambassador.  I picked up on the intricacies of how our two countries interact on a political level by attending this conference, and I would like to bring my experiences back to Capitol Hill to help continue building our Special Relationship from the other side.*

**Not so specific examples**

Sometimes, the specifics do not seem relevant.  Examples can be especially hard to think of if you did not have an internship or job abroad.  That’s okay!  A more general description of your experience can still be a good way to demonstrate your independence and cultural awareness to an employer.  When I applied to work as an assistant at a travel agency, I focused on the broader view:

*My desire to learn about and make connections between a wide variety of subjects keeps me constantly searching for new ideas and opportunities to better understand the world around me.  This manifests itself in my strong interest of travel.  For instance, I was privileged enough to be able to*[*study abroad in London*](http://www.studyabroad.com/programs/europe,england,london+other,greater+london,london/default.aspx)*the spring semester of my junior year.  While there, I took advantage of my proximity to Europe by traveling around the UK, Spain, France, Italy and the Netherlands.  I learned the ins and outs of the travel world: from plane to train, from hotel to hostel, and from tourist trap to local treasure.*

**Final tips**

Some other things you might want to consider mentioning when writing a cover letter include:

* Your interactions with different cultures
* Your adaptability to new situations
* The organization and detail you put into planning trips
* Personal independence
* Managing money in another currency
* Communication across language barriers
* Relevant coursework or research projects

A lot of people think that study abroad is all about having fun – and it is!  But it is also a great learning and growing opportunity.  Put a professional spin on things, and any employer will be impressed to see how much you took away from the experience.

Read more: <http://www.studyabroad.com/articles/featuring-study-abroad-in-your-cover-letter.aspx#ixzz3M8YFmqtd>