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## **Articulating Your Study Abroad Experience Packet**

*Created by Yale Study Abroad & Yale Office of Career Strategy*

## Step 1: UNPACK Your Study Abroad Experience

**U**nderstand the value of what you learned and experienced.

**N**avigate the various components that made up your time abroad.

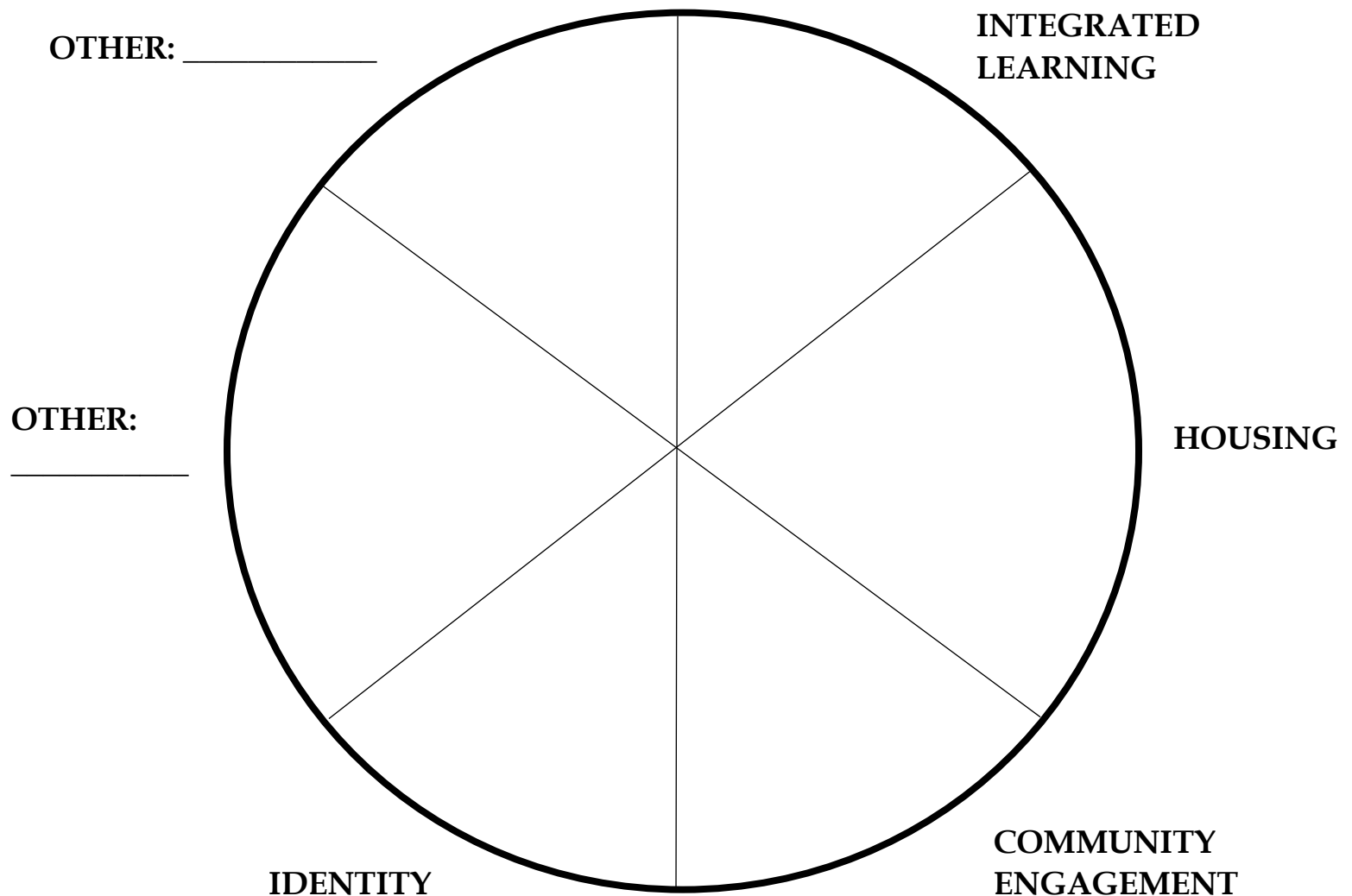
**P**rocess your new skills.

**A**rticulate the impact of your experience on your personal, academic, & professional goals.

**C**ommunicate with friends, family members, & future employers/graduate schools/programs.

**K**now your opportunities to market your experience.

Work clockwise to fill in each pie slice with details on that component of your experience. Try to come up with at least three bullet points per segment. Sample questions to consider are included on the next page.



## UNPACK Questions to Consider

### Integrated Learning

- Includes: Coursework, Internship, Service-Learning, Independent Research, Fieldwork
- Which language(s) did you use? If speaking the host country language, were there regional/local dialects you learned?
- With whom did you participate in this experience? What relationships did you build?
- How would you describe the learning environment?
- How did your experience relate to your major, career goals, personal interests, and/or knowledge of the host country?

### Housing

- How would you describe your housing – student apartment, dorm, family home, etc.?
- With whom did you live? Who were your neighbors?
- What language did you speak at home?
- How would you describe the location of your housing?
- Did you experience any challenges navigating around your neighborhood?

### Community Engagement

- How did you engage with the local community? For example, did you...
  - Adopt any parts of the lifestyle (e.g., biking)?
  - Volunteer?
  - Join a sports team, club, or organization on campus or in the community?
  - Participate in a language exchange?

### Identity

- What did you learn about yourself? Have you changed in any way?
- Did you have to adapt in the way that you behaved or dressed?
- What personal challenges did you face?
- Did the experience abroad affect your understanding of the culture?

### Other Components (Select 2)

What else stood out about your experience abroad? Some aspects to consider include:

- Language acquisition
- Budgeting/funding
- Climate
- Food
- Independent travel
- Relationships
- Communication
- Understanding of time
- Use of local transportation

## Step 2: Identify Skills & Strengths Tied to Each Pie Slice

### Sample Skills & Qualities

What skills or proficiencies have you acquired or enhanced while you were abroad?

Skills that professionals with international experiences cite as being particularly useful in their careers include:

- Enhanced cultural awareness and sensitivity to customs and cultural differences
- Foreign language proficiency
- Adaptability
- Ability to identify and achieve goals
- General improvement in communications skills
- Increased confidence, initiative, and independence
- Greater flexibility, sense of humor
- Awareness of global economic and political issues and realities
- Ability to maintain an open mind and be tolerant of others
- Clarification of goals and improved self-awareness
- General travel skills
- Resource management
- Organization
- Problem solving
- Crisis management
- Patience
- Listening and observation
- Specific professional skills or knowledge base

### Step 3: Telling Your Story

**Part I – Opening:** I’m a [class year] at Yale studying [major] with a particular interest in [X industry/opportunity].

**Part II – Motivational Story:** Tell a *short story* about *why* you first became interested in this area. Begin with a phrase like, “I first became interested in XXX when...” Remember that a story includes a protagonist who faces a challenge/new situation and makes a choice that results in an outcome.

**Part III – Relevant Academic Work:** *What* classes or academic projects did you complete that helped you build your knowledge and skills for this industry/opportunity?

**Part IV – Supporting Experiences:** What two *supporting experiences* have helped you further develop your skills that would be useful for this job? Use your international experience (your most salient ‘pie slice’), and consider items such as internships, research experiences, student leadership positions, etc.

**Part V – Closing:** Taken together, write one sentence that conveys how your story, academic background, and supporting experiences would make you a *good fit* OR something about that industry/opportunity that is particularly *exciting to you* along with a *series of questions* that you might ask.

## **Step 4: Practice Behavioral Interview Questions with Study Abroad Examples**

Sample General/Behavioral Interview Questions:

### **Introduction/General**

Tell me a little about yourself. Why did you choose Yale?

What have you done that you are proud of? What is your greatest accomplishment? How do you spend your free time?

What is your greatest strength? What is your greatest weakness? Where do you see yourself in five years?

How would you describe your ideal job?

What type of work environment do you prefer? How would your friends describe you?

Who do you admire most and why?

### **Position-Specific**

How would you describe yourself? What personal traits make you stand out for this role? What interests you most about a career in?

Why are you interested in this position? What appeals to you about the role? What are you hoping to gain and learn from the position?

What in your background best qualifies you for this position?

What differentiates this company/organization from other companies/organizations you are interviewing with?

What are the greatest challenges you think the industry is facing? What challenges do you think our company/organization faces?

### **Leadership**

Walk me through your resume. Tell me a little more about each of your leadership experiences. Describe a leadership role you've held and tell why you committed your time to it.

What would you say were the most important responsibilities in your most recent leadership roles? What has been the most difficult project you've tackled in your academics or leadership roles?

Give an example of your ability to build motivation with your classmates. How did you build a shared vision/goal?

How do you instill in others an atmosphere of support, responsiveness and respect?

### **Creativity**

How do you define creativity?

In the past 4 years, what have you done that you consider truly creative? Which of your creative accomplishments has given you the most satisfaction?

Provide an example of a time when you offered an innovative solution to a difficult problem.

### **Analytical**

How would you describe your approach to problem solving?

Tell me about a complex problem you solved -walk me through your thinking as you solved it. Describe a situation in which you had to apply your skills to learn a new technology/ process.

Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.

### **Teamwork**

What makes you a good team member?

How do you determine the role you play in a group?

What make you most effective with people? What kinds of people do you find most challenging? What conflicts or difficulties do you experience?

How have you handled a difficult working relationship?

### **Communication Skills**

How would you describe your communication skills?

Would you rather write a report or give a verbal presentation?

How would you rate your writing abilities? Listening skills? What have you done to improve them?

Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.

Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.

### **Management Skills**

How do you prioritize your schedule / handle different priorities? How do you make important decisions?

Describe a situation demonstrating your ability to transition quickly and effectively between tasks.

Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.

Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.

Describe a difficult situation that you feel you should have handled differently. What did you learn from the experience?

Provide an example of a situation where you had to manage multiple competing deadlines? Were the dead- lines met?

### **Drive**

What does success/failure mean to you?

Give me an example of how you demonstrate initiative.

Describe an example in which you aspired to reach a goal. What obstacles confronted you? What did you do to overcome them?

Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed. Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.

Tell me about the most successful project you've completed and why you consider it successful.

Are your grades a good measure of your ability to learn? Are they a good indicator of your academic achievement?

### **Conclusion**

Is there anything else you'd like me to know about you? Summarize your candidacy -why should we hire you?

## **Additional Resources**

- [Study Abroad Returnee Resources](#)
- [Resumes](#)
  - Tip! Your study abroad experience should be listed under your education.
- [Cover Letters](#)
- [Meet with a Study Abroad Adviser](#)
- [Office of Career Strategy Advising & Events](#)