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International Education: Study Abroad Scholarship \$500

1. Provide an introduction and overview of your study abroad experience.

My study abroad experience began with my first time setting foot on a plane. It was quite an experience in itself. With approximately eight hours of flight time complete with a layover and multiple time changes, it was a very interesting start to my semester long adventure.

After arriving in London, the other students and I boarded a coach bus and arrived at Harlaxton College two hours later. We students were housed either in Harlaxton Manor or the nearby Carriage House. Both were very beautiful and extravagant. As a whole, the college is able to showcase dated architecture, enormous gardens, and even some remaining trenches and bunkers from WWII that are perfect examples of what was taught in the required British Studies class.

My experience cannot be summed up in a few paragraphs, because it means much more than what I can express in words. I befriended fellow students from all over the United States as well as meeting locals from cities such as Dublin, Ireland; Bayeux, France; Krakow, Poland; Florence, Italy; and many others. I was able to strengthen my independence by traveling unhindered, learn that some mistakes lead to better opportunities, and most importantly embrace new things.

2. Using one to two examples, explain how your study abroad experience advanced your knowledge and understanding of the world's diverse cultures, environments, practices and/or values.

I had always been told that the culture of the United States and England is very similar, and to an extent that is true. What those people never told me was that there are also many subtle differences and actions that take place behind closed doors that make each country and each individual different. For example, one of my British Studies professors always talked about the queen and how marvelous she is. We often made it a running joke about how much he loved the royal family. However, in Britain's culture, it is a serious matter: my professor sat outside the gates for about 17 hours because he heard the queen was coming. Although a constitutional democracy is very different than what we have, what I find interesting is the way the citizens view their government. Britain's people view their government with high regard (for the most part) and telling people that "you don't follow politics" is not an acceptable answer in Europe.

3. Describe how your study abroad experience has impacted your knowledge and understanding of global systems, institutions, and relationships of power?

The required British Studies class also covered the first and second world wars. During these units, we looked closer at the relationships between the United States and Britain. We also covered key areas in European history such as the great potato famine in Ireland. The relationship between England and Ireland was analyzed when almost no aid was given to the starving Irish.

Scotland was also voting on its independence while I was studying abroad. At first I did not understand what effects would come from either outcome until my professor explained it to us. Scotland and England may have had a rocky relationship from the start, but they have grown together. They have seats in parliament that are filled by the English and the Scottish. They are inclusive and each a part of the others identity. However, if the Scots had gotten their independence, there would have been a different kind of relationship. They would have their own government, but would have to provide their own military and defense. Also many of the bigger business cities that drive their economy are located in England. The more I thought about it, the more I was surprised at how country relationships determine.

Overall, by having the opportunity to travel to foreign countries and witness firsthand the norms, architecture, and customs I was able to become a global citizen. Although I do not know everything, I am confident that I can approach the situation with a calm, accepting, and open minded attitude.

4. Identify and describe how a decision (or lack of a decision) made by people in your home community or country has impacted your host community or country. Or, if you prefer, identify and describe how a decision/lack of a decision made by people in your host community/country has impacted your home community/country.

The biggest issue the United Kingdom faced while I was studying was the referendum for Scottish independence. Because the referendum didn't pass, there was not a lot of change that impacted the United States. However, if the referendum had passed, this would force the United States to negotiate trade with two countries to obtain the same amount of goods they had before the referendum. The Scottish people may also be tempted to demand a higher prices for some of their goods for two main reasons: 1) with the loss of England's main business cities such as London, Liverpool, and Manchester and 2) Scotland produces specific goods that – once separated from England – will be uniquely theirs (e.g. wool and cashmere).

5. Explore how your study abroad experience has impacted your professional or career goals or aspirations. What skills did you develop or enhance during your study abroad experience that might be transferable or beneficial in your future workplace?

Having the opportunity to study abroad has changed my life in more ways than one. It inspired immediate changes such as the burning desire to travel the world. I have always wanted to travel, but studying abroad has made me realize that it is possible if proper budgeting, planning, and time management are in effect. I am hoping that I can use my experiences, skills, and tips to help others gain the opportunity to see the world as well. This experience has also resulted in professional goals. As a communication major and business minor, I believe my qualifications will be very adaptable to a variety of jobs. Now that I have experience being abroad as well, my goal is to pursue a career that facilitates travel and relationships with foreign countries. Even though I was stationed in a country that spoke English, another career goal is to become fluent in other languages and become familiar with even more cultures.

6. Study abroad can be a transformative learning experience, in which students learn more about themselves and the world in which they live. A) Describe a disorienting dilemma you experienced while abroad and why you found it disorienting. B) Describe how the dilemma challenged your previous knowledge of the world's cultures, environments, practices, or values. C) Explain how the dilemma helped you to understand how your decisions and the decisions of others have global implications.

One of the first few weekends was the most stressful for me because I had never had to navigate public transportation before. In many of the larger European cities, there are buses, subways/tubes, cabs, and trains; over half of which come at specific times on specific routes. This was very confusing for me when I first arrived in London. The tube map was just a mess of tunnels and curved, colored lines on a map. After asking the older, working gentleman for help I had an idea of how it all worked, but still needed to navigate it a few times myself before I truly felt comfortable. This isn't to say my friends and I didn't make a couple of mistakes throughout the semester, but we were able to find our way back and laugh it off.

Inexperience was the main reason why I found the tube system hard to navigate at first. My experience in Wisconsin didn't prepare me for Europe's emphasis on public transportation. This is not a bad thing by any means, in fact, it allowed me to learn something new, gain confidence in trying different things, and also allowed me a deeper look into England's values. From their extensive transportation services, it is clear that they believe the ability to get around is a high priority. Looking deeper into it, one can conclude that the phenomenal train system allows Europeans to experience what life is like in other countries. This would likely cause them to be more knowledgeable about global events and even more accepting of foreign cultures.

I believe the United States should adopt a similar approach to public transportation because it has many advantages. If our country decided to do this, it would result in fewer emissions because there would be many people in a bus or subway instead of driving their own car. It would also cut down on the number of fossil fuels being consumed. The tube system in London is run electronically, and the buses and trains are servicing an enormous number of people. It would drastically lessen the damage currently being done to our environment and also give (domestic and foreign) individuals the chance to see all of the sights and attractions our beautiful country has to offer.

7. Finally, please attach two pictures, with captions, that illustrate what was important and meaningful about your experience.



**Manarola (Cinque Terre), Italy** – This small village was definitely an eye opening experience as to how different cultures can be. It was beautifully stunning with vineyards and colorful houses by the sea, it is impossible not to fall in love with things that seem unusual.



**Harlaxton Manor; Grantham, England** – The greatest part about studying abroad is forging new relationships with people you wouldn't have had the opportunity to meet otherwise. I will never forget the amazing experiences or the outstanding people I had the pleasure of meeting through Harlaxton.