



Melbourne Global Mobility



returning student

guide

myMelbourne | myWorld

Welcome home!

Welcome back to Melbourne! We are excited to have you back on campus and look forward to hearing about your exciting overseas adventures. You are probably feeling bittersweet about being back. You, no doubt, have changed and grown quite a bit but your friends and family have also changed and had experiences while you were away which can make re-entry more difficult than expected.

This guide is designed to help you come to terms with the life-changing experience you had and provide an outlet for you to write down your thoughts. We want you to have successful transitions throughout the whole experience from pre-departure to re-entry and we hope you are able to use the skills you learned while overseas both in your future career and in your relationships with others.

Now, go on, enjoy all the wonderful things you missed about Melbourne and Australia while you were away!

The Melbourne Global Mobility Team

“In a sense, it is the coming back, the return, which gives meaning to the going forth. We really don’t know where we’ve been until we come back to where we were – only where we were may not be as it was because of who we’ve become, which, after all, is why we left.”

-Bernard from “Northern Exposure”, returning from Africa

After the initial novelty of arriving home and noticing the differences between my host country and home all over again from the other side, it took me several months to register that I had lived an entirely different life overseas and that from then on I would always have a second home in France, whether I liked it or not! -Returned Exchange Student, France

The Re-entry Worm

Initial Excitement:
Enjoy being home

Judgemental Stage: Finding fault

Realisation Stage:
Noticing significant changes at home and in oneself

Balanced Readaptation:
Integrating the experience abroad with living at home

Reverse Culture Shock:
Frustration

-Margaret D. Pusch, 1997

Cultural Adjustment

Can you identify differences between culture shock and reverse culture shock?

1. Culture Shock
2. Reverse Culture Shock
3. Which has been hardest to cope with?

Top 10 Re-entry Challenges

by Dr. Bruce Le Brack

The following list was compiled by interviewing a group of returned students who all agree that re-entry should be taken seriously. Here are their thoughts on re-entry and they hope that they will make your return more enjoyable and productive.

1. Boredom

While abroad you are constantly stimulated by new and exciting cultural treasures to discover. After the initial excitement of coming home wears off you may find yourself bored. It is up to you to not fall into a pit of inactivity and boredom. Try joining multicultural groups or volunteering.

2. “No one wants to hear”

This is a very common experience amongst those returning from a long-term sojourn abroad. Don't be surprised if your friends and family only want to hear as much as “it was amazing” and then move onto other subjects. Don't consider it rejection, often times they have a difficult time relating to you and your experiences.

3. You can't explain

For those that are interested in hearing about all of the nitty-gritty details don't be surprised if you can't find the words to properly describe your experience. It is difficult to convey this kind of experience to those that don't have a frame of reference or significant travel experience.

4. Reverse ‘homesickness’

Just as you may have felt homesickness while you were away it is natural to feel homesick for your new home. Feelings of loss are a natural part of living abroad and can be remedied by keeping in contact with friends from your host culture.

5. Relationships have changed

Changes with family and friends may be positive or negative but are inevitable after spending a period of time apart. Some of your ideas and morals may have changed and the best way to deal with this is openness, flexibility and tempered optimism.

6. People see ‘wrong’ changes

People may ascribe bad traits to your change in attitude or your experience abroad. This can stem from jealousy, fear, feelings of superiority or inferiority. This phase usually passes very quickly so be sure to monitor yourself.

7. People misunderstand

People may misinterpret your new communication style as boastful or inappropriate. For example, inserting non-English words in conversation or wearing clothing that was only popular in your host culture. Be aware of how you may look to others and how your behaviour is interpreted.

8. Feelings of alienation

Many returnees develop critical eyes towards their home society and of those around them that lead to feelings of alienation. It is important to remember that there is no difference from before you left. It is ok to make mental comparisons but they are often best kept to yourself.

9. Inability to apply new knowledge and skills

Many returnees feel the skills they acquired abroad (linguistic, technical, social) are not necessary back home. Be creative with the new skills developed and try to use some of the cultural adjustment skills to help with your re-entry.

10. Loss/Compartmentalisation of experience (shoeboxing)

Often times students are worried that their memories and experience will be lost due to increasing busyness with family, jobs and university commitments. These experiences don't have to be lost; keep in touch with friends from abroad, continue studying the language or meet other students that went abroad.

Memories NOT to put in a shoebox!

1. What made me laugh the loudest?
2. What brought tears to my eyes?
3. What is my greatest personal insight?
4. What was my biggest cultural gaff?
5. What was my greatest cultural success?

What's Up with Culture? retrieved 1/3/11

Tips you can relate to:

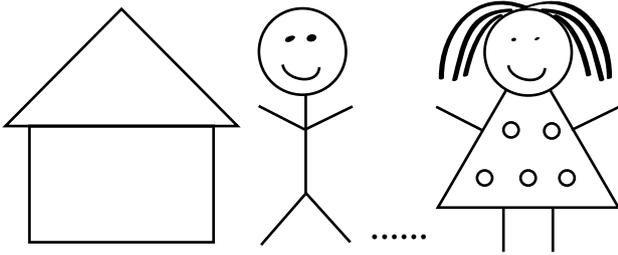
What are some ideas you can think of to help battle re-entry shock?

Other useful tips

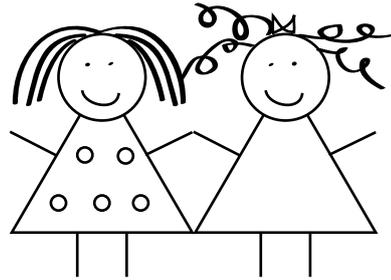
1. Mentally prepare for the adjustment process
2. Allow yourself time
3. Understand that the familiar will seem different
4. There will be some cultural catching up to do
5. Reserve judgments
6. Respond thoughtfully and slowly
7. Cultivate sensitivity
8. Beware of comparisons
9. Remain flexible
10. Seek support networks

Relationships

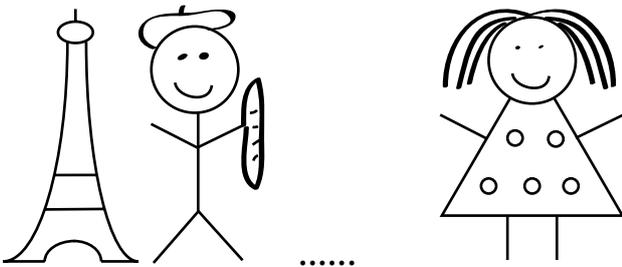
It is important to recognise that when you come home from abroad that nearly every relationship in your life may need to be renegotiated. Below is a list of 4 types of relationships that occur during re-entry.



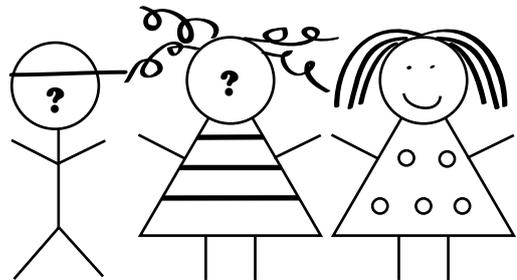
The family and friends you left at home.



Students who were abroad with you who may also be coming home.



People you grew close to while abroad who didn't come home with you.



The friends you have yet to meet.

Margaret Pusch, retrieved 1/3/11

Take-aways

Recently researchers and professionals have put an emphasis on the benefits of participating in education abroad programs. However, having ups and downs is common and whether you see the glass as half empty or full can depend on what type of day you are having. What do you think are some of the ups and downs of returning home after living and studying overseas?



e.g. I respect cultural differences.



e.g. I am frustrated by the narrow-mindedness of people at home.

You got skills

Below is a check-list of skills or attributes you may or may not have acquired from your overseas experience. Feel free to include some of these skills in your resume, cover letter or during a job interview. As you read along check-off the changes that may have occurred in you.

- I have a greater capacity to accept differences in others and to tolerate other people's actions and ideas that may be vastly different from my own.
- I have a greater ability to empathize (i.e., to sense how an event appears and feels to someone else).
- I understand that there are many ways to accomplish the same task and that those approaches are only "different," not necessarily better or worse.
- I have more curiosity about, and respect for, new ideas.
- I think more critically: I am more discriminating and skeptical, particularly of stereotypes.
- I understand better another country's role in world affairs.
- I see the world as more interconnected than ever before.
- I have greater sympathy for the struggles of international students and immigrants as a result of my experience.
- I understand more fully my own strengths and weaknesses.
- I can accept failures and shortcomings in myself more easily.
- I am more willing to share my thoughts and feelings with others, and to be open when others wish to share theirs with me.
- I have increased my perseverance and self-discipline.
- I am more deeply committed to an idea, cause, or goal.
- I have increased my capacity to experiment and take risks.
- I have a clearer notion of what I wish to do with my life.
- I am more independent in my relations with family and friends.
- I feel a greater need to have diverse experiences and friends.
- I can accept the shortcomings of my family members in an understanding way.
- I have learned to place a lower value on material things.
- I see my own cultural values more clearly and understand how and why they differ from others.
- I can evaluate advantages and disadvantages of my own culture and society more objectively (i.e., from the perspective of an outsider).
- I am sensitive to subtle features of my own culture that I had never seen before.
- I have a deeper understanding of (if not necessarily commitment to) the values and lifestyle of my native community.
- I have the ability to make clear personal choices and goals for my life rather than complying with what others expect and want from me.
- I am more capable of solving life's day-to-day problems and accomplishing necessary tasks.
- I am interested in, and capable of, making long-range plans.
- I think that I need fewer friends but deeper (more intimate and more trusting) friendships.
- I can "analyze" a social situation more quickly than before (i.e., figure out what is going on and react appropriately).
- I have a deeper understanding of the common problems and issues that confront all human beings on this planet.
- I have an increased motivation to go abroad again.

What's up with Culture, retrieved 1/3/2011

Career Advice

International experience and cross-cultural skills are highly sought after by employers. Here are a few tips on how to integrate your education abroad experience into your cover letter and resumé and make it stand out to future employers.

Resumé Tips

1. Include your education abroad experience somewhere! Decide how relevant it is to your resumé objective. It is most often included in the *education* or *related experience* section.
2. Highlight the accomplishments from your time abroad.
3. Market your transferable skills from education abroad: time-management, adaptability, self-reliance, language proficiency.

Georgetown University Exchange, Washington D.C., USA January 2010-May 2010

- Intensive study of US politics, economy, and history
- Involvement in student government and advocacy groups on campus
- Interned with political leaders in a grassroots think-tank.

Formula for Bulleted Statements

- Action verb + Responsibilities + Impact
- Action verb + Situation + Results

Employers typically only spend 30-40 seconds reading a resumé so be sure to make yours attractive and easy-to-read!

- **Font** - Use standard fonts such as Arial or Times New Roman in a readable size (preferably 12, no smaller than 10)
- **Margins** - Use 1-2cm margins on all four sides of the document. Be sure you have a good balance between text and white space
- **Style** - Highlight important facts and headings by bolding, underlining, increasing font size, and adding bullet points to attract the reader's eye
- **Action verbs** - Use action verbs to begin statements describing skills and responsibilities
- **Length** - Be concise, a 1-2 page resume is adequate unless you have had extensive experience that is applicable.
- **Errors** - Be grammatically perfect and free of errors

Sample Resumé

KAREN JANE ROBERTSON

PERSONAL DETAILS

12 Turner Ave, Broadmeadows, Victoria, 3046
(03) 9437 6452
mob 0401 648 352
kjrob@hotmail.com.au

OBJECTIVE

To apply my creative energy and enthusiasm for marketing to a role involving product promotion with a major retailer.

EDUCATION

2009 - Present Bachelor of Commerce Management
University of Melbourne

January 2010 - May 2010 Stuttgart University
Exchange, Germany

- Subjects in Economics of the European Union and German Commerce

2002 - 2008 Victorian Certificate of Education
St John's College
Broadmeadows, Victoria
ENTER SCORE 97.5

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- Golden Key National Honour Society 2005 - membership extended to top 15% of students for outstanding academic achievement.
- Awarded recognition for placement among top five students in Marketing Research and Retail Management 2005.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2010 - Current Marketing Assistant - (part time)
Blakesby Education
Melbourne

- Assisting with the development of marketing plans for the field sales force.
- Monitoring and reporting results to the direct marketing manager.
- Developing ideas for creating new business.

2008 - 2009 Duty Manager and Marketing and Promotions Officer (casual)
Hoyts Theatres
Broadmeadows, Victoria

- Supervised staff in Candy Bar, floor and ticket box, including open/close procedures.
- Produced marketing programs to support each film release.
- Developed, as part of team, on-going marketing activities to increase sales in Candy Bar.

2004 Marketer (casual)
David Jones
Melbourne

- Marketed David Jones Card to customers in store and by cold calling
- Promoted the benefits and uses of card to customers
- Approved credit applications over phone

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

During my exchange I volunteered with Sos Children's Villages in Germany. My duties included updating brochures and coming up with ideas for fundraising and public relations initiatives for greater awareness of their organisation.

RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Computer skills

Confident and experienced in MSWord, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, QuarkXPress and basic web design. These skills were incorporated into numerous class presentations and voluntary work activities.

Communication skills

- Hosted the 2003 Valedictory Dinner and formal evening.
- Displayed intercultural communication skills by volunteering in the Stuttgart community.
- Created brochures and newsletter articles for MS Society as volunteer worker.

Analytical skills

• Conducted research for second year project into the way in which pharmaceuticals are marketed. This required the sophisticated use of internet resources, the development of questionnaires and detailed analysis of results.

Teamwork skills

- Demonstrated a range of teamwork skills in different roles as part of group assignments throughout tertiary studies.
- Played competition netball for four years during high school.

Planning and organising skills

- Organised venues for choral productions and arranged publicity via a variety of media
- Arranged several book launches, including catering, invitations, venues and publicity.
- Managed part time work and study while maintaining HD average through effective time management.

INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

My love of music has led me to sing in a choir, performing several times a year in major choral works at the Melbourne Town Hall. I also love to play the piano for relaxation. I enjoy reading popular magazines for marketing ideas, as well as crime fiction. Spending time with friends, dining out and attending live theatre productions are also favourite pastimes.

REFEREES

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+ 49 185 4589 23470

Cover Letter Tips

- The purpose of a cover letter is to get an employer to read your resume more thoroughly
- The cover letter is a marketing tool to communicate your value to the employer
- Be sure to write a custom cover letter to each job you apply for

611 Rathdowne St.
Carlton North, VIC 3054
8 April 2011

Mr. Lennox Vieth
630 Bourke St.
Melbourne, VIC 3000

Dear Mr. Vieth:

Dr. Margarat Becker, professor in the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Melbourne, encouraged me to contact you concerning a graduate position with one of your companies for the winter of 2012. One such company, Systoflex, interests me in particular. Upon researching it, I was especially impressed with the variety of markets this company served, while maintaining an increasing stock value over the past 5 months.

In May, I will be completing my second year at the University of Melbourne in the Bachelor of Commerce program. I currently hold a broad understanding of business and the computer applications needed to support business activities. My specific field of interest lies in business communication tools such as internal networking and database tracking systems. My experience studying abroad in Germany for a semester has provided me with a cross-cultural perspective of information systems. My subject knowledge plus my ability to adapt to changing environments will make for a smooth transition from the classroom to the business environment.

In the past I have taken part in many group projects. Some projects entailed designing a tracking system for a university tool crib and designing a database tracking system for a local land trust company. Throughout these tasks, I have increased skills such as the ability to work as part of a team, leadership and communication. Additionally, I am a self-motivated and autonomous worker. I am confident that I will be able to adapt to any situation that might occur, and be a valuable member to your company. I hope to acquire this position in order to gain experience in my field while serving my employer to the best of my ability.

I appreciate you taking the time to review my resume, and I look forward to hearing from you regarding this request. I am available any day of the week and can be reached at 0412 356 898 or ojaeger@ugrad.unimelb.edu.au.

Sincerely,

Signature

Owen Jaeger

Enclosure

Heading

Your address
Date
Employer name
Employer Address

Paragraph 1

State the position you are applying for, how you found the position and why you want to work for this company.

Paragraph 2

Discuss your education abroad experiences and skills directly relating to the job description- address requirements listed.

Paragraph 3

State your personal attributes and how they relate to the job.

Paragraph 4

Restate your interest in the position, provide contact information and don't forget to thank them for their time.

Signature

Be sure to mention any attachments you are submitting with your resume and cover letter and if you submit by mail remember to sign!

Going Abroad Again

Lots of people that study overseas suddenly find themselves addicted to travel. They will do anything to go abroad again whether it be working at a pub in the UK or volunteering in Africa. Going abroad again can be a lot of work but is a worthwhile complement to your education abroad experience.

Ways to go

- **Study Abroad/Exchange** - Even though it may seem impossible to fit another education abroad program into your course, many students are repeat customers and search for short-term programs to participate in if they did a semester long program and vice-versa. Alternatively, it is possible to study overseas during graduate programs. The University of Melbourne is working hard to provide education abroad opportunities to graduate students.
- **Postgraduate studies overseas** - If you are not following a University of Melbourne pathway (3 yrs undergraduate, 2 yrs graduate) pursuing graduate school is another option for living overseas again. Many graduate programs around the world teach in English which makes their programs accessible to international students. Look out for funding opportunities such as the Menzies Foundation or Commonwealth Scholarships in the UK.
- **Working holiday** - Australian citizens are lucky in that the Australian government has arrangements with various countries allowing their citizens to do a 1-2 year working holiday abroad. A working holiday is a good way to travel around while making money. Be aware that it may be difficult to find jobs in the field that you studied, a lot of people work in cafes and bars or doing agricultural work.
- **Volunteer** - Volunteering abroad provides you with an meaningful experience which usually takes place in a location that's off the beaten path. Often times education abroad can be about enhancing your own personal experience and character while volunteering involves giving back to those in need. Don't be surprised if you are expected to pay a fee to volunteer (it helps to ensure you have the type of experience you are expecting) and it can often cover insurance and accommodation. Discover opportunities at www.volunteerabroad.com or www.planeterra.org
- **Teach English** - Teaching English can be the best way to earn a decent living while having a unique experience in another country. If earning money is your goal try checking out Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea or China or to immerse yourself in European cultures check out Spain, Czech Republic or Poland.

Diving in Head First: How to get an International Job

Getting sponsored for a full-time job in a foreign country can be a difficult task that involves patience, determination, and often times a lot of luck. If you are pursuing a career in a highly skilled field that is in demand such as engineering, science, or medicine you may have an easier time obtaining sponsorship than people in education, marketing, public relations or finance. Below are a list of tips to get you started on your overseas job hunt.

- **Be passionate** - Passion for your field cannot be taught or learned through experience and is highly regarded by staff in managerial roles. Passion will prove your dedication by fueling your creativity to improve your field of interest and commitment during busy/difficult times.
- **Be reflective** - Ask yourself heaps of questions such as 'Do I want to be sure to get a job in my field?', 'Am I particular about the region of the world in which I want to work?', 'Am I willing to do just about anything, anywhere just to go abroad again?'
- **Invest in international experiences** - Sometimes in order to get an international job you need to have various international experiences, which can seem like a Catch-22. Rather than focusing on making money, try focusing on beefing up the international experience on your resumé by volunteering, travelling, learning a 2nd language or doing a working holiday. Become an expert in another country's culture, preferably the country you hope to live in.
- **Nurture relationships** - You've heard it a million times, 'It's not what you know, it's who you know'. While your education and career experience are highly valuable often times to get your foot in the door you need to rely on your brother's, friend's, cousin's mom. Nurture the relationships you made while overseas by regularly keeping in contact with friends or professionals in your field.
- **Conduct informal informational interviews** - Hopefully you were able to make some professional contacts overseas, whether they are academics from your host or home institution or colleagues from volunteering or internships. Ask them questions about what experience is necessary to obtain a career in their field, whether you need to pursue graduate study and if they know of any graduate positions available.
- **Be patient** - Often times to get adequate experience in order to be sponsored you need to surpass the experience of citizens from the host country. This can be done by pursuing graduate study, gaining significant experience in your field in your home country or proving your worth by doing an entry-level position. Not to mention the uncertainty of sponsorship and visa processing can be very time consuming!

Cultural BINGO

Traveled to 5 countries	Speaks 3 languages	Got lost on public transport	Saw a foreign play	Walked 5 kms/day
Traveled to an island	Went ice-skating outdoors	Ate offal	Drove on the right side of the road	Met a significant other
Went to hospital	Traveled on a boat	Visited a famous museum	Stayed in a fancy hotel	Joined a fraternity/sorority
Taught someone English	Wrote all papers in a foreign language	Rode a camel	Bought new clothes to blend in	Lost weight
Met a local celebrity	Had a run-in with the police	Had a job	Was on TV or in the newspaper	Got good grades