

***The Compatibility of Study
Abroad Programs with Career
Objectives and Job
Opportunities***

Presented by:

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**Overview of Study Abroad
Programs**

- How common are study abroad programs in law schools?

Out of 200 accredited law schools:

- 113 offer summer programs abroad
- 49 have cooperative agreements with foreign law schools
- 10 offer semester abroad programs (campus abroad)
- 50 allow students to study abroad for the semester or a year
- 18 offer dual degree programs abroad
- 67 have some type of student exchange

Types of Study Abroad Programs

- Summer: (In 2007, 136 students participated in WCL's summer law programs)
- Semester: (WCL: More than 30 possibilities every year)
- International Externships/internships
- Dual degree programs (one and two years abroad): Around 20 students per year. 4 programs.

Why do students study abroad?

- The world is getting smaller
- More students speak a second language today than 20 years ago and want to use it professionally
- More law firms do business with foreign countries
- More law firms rely on attorneys who understand a foreign culture

What Students Gain From Studying Abroad

- Opportunity to learn about another country's legal system
- View the US system in a different light
- Application of legal analysis and writing skills
- Comparative perspectives prepare students for legal practice

Reconciling the Study Abroad Experience with Career Objectives

- Many students interested in “international law”
- Exposure to other legal systems can help refine career goals
- Substantive legal analytical and writing skills are continuously developing
- For some, a “once in a lifetime” opportunity enhancing personal and professional development

How Career Services and Study Abroad Programs Can Work Together

- Career Services want students to gain substantive legal experience, particularly after the first year of law school
- Coordinators of study abroad programs want students to take advantage of new educational experiences
- The two should not be mutually exclusive, but challenges exist
- Collaborative contribution towards a comprehensive career plan for students

Strategies for Working Together to Maximize Student Experiences

- At WCL, programs reviewed to determine impact on students’ career development
- Timing adjustments implemented to maximize the remainder of the summer for students to pursue legal employment
- Constant communication and promotion (e.g., OCPD invited to study abroad fair and dual degree information sessions)

Strategies for Working Together to Maximize Student Experiences (cont'd)

- Strategies Depend on Student Objectives
 - Individual counseling is key to assess student goals and how the study abroad experience contributes
 - Are students interested in staying abroad after the program? International Coordinator can help.
 - Career Services should still emphasize that gaining substantive legal experience is important (help identify “flexible employers”)
 - Connect students with others who have successfully done both

Marketing the Study Abroad Experience

- Resume considerations (where and what to include)
- Does a connection exist to a particular employer’s practice?
- Can a cover letter assist in providing perspective?

Additional Challenges

- WCL Dual Degree Programs
 - Addressing student challenges for purposes of Fall Recruitment
 - Educating employers about the various programs and how they are structured
 - How do employers evaluate their availability?
 - Timing issues during initial screening interviews and the call back phase

An Employer's Perspective – What is the Impact of Study Abroad Programs on the Hiring Process?

- Squire, Sanders & Dempsey LLP has 32 offices in 15 countries, counseling clients across borders in 40 different languages.
- Different geographical, social and cultural backgrounds resulting in a wealth of talents.
- To achieve this, SSD bases its operating philosophy in a diverse practice, true partnership and legal work must never be less than the best.

An Employer's Perspective – What is the Impact of Study Abroad Programs on the Hiring Process?

- Cathy Kettlewell – Personal Background
 - Mexican Law Degree
 - LLM at U.C. Berkeley
 - Masters in Bioethics and Law in Spain
- Practice Group – Energy
 - Hot area of law
 - Renewable Energy spreading in Europe and Latin America
 - Important to be able to cross borders and communicate

An Employer's Perspective – What is the Impact of Study Abroad Programs on the Hiring Process?

Do employers pay attention to study abroad programs on resume? YES. What is important to look for:

- A program that provides additional legal expertise in an area of the law
- Program that enhances legal experience and not just an "experience abroad"
- A program that provides knowledge of technical and specific legal institutions

An Employer's Perspective – What is the Impact of Study Abroad Programs on the Hiring Process?

If candidate was one semester in program, or a dual degree program what to look for:

- That it was a full immersion into another culture and legal system
- Understanding another system and probably be able to do comparative approach
- Can be used by the law firm for business development purposes
- Candidate must be able to manage herself in a totally different environment (managing language, cultural, language skills)

An Employer's Perspective – What is the Impact of Study Abroad Programs on the Hiring Process?

How does it help/hurt? -- do you value a study abroad experience during the hiring process?

- Studies abroad help so long as the resume reflects a specific area of specialization or expertise.
- The advantage of having different talents, views and interest enhances the ability to respond to clients necessities.
- Diversity and experience are useful tools to resolve clients requests.

An Employer's Perspective – What is the Impact of Study Abroad Programs on the Hiring Process?

Does exposure or learning another legal system help?

- It is helpful because you can communicate and understand other legal systems.
- You may serve as a bridge of communication between U.S. lawyers and local counsel in other countries.
- You are able to provide input and be taken into account without being dismissed for not knowing the system or not understanding the country.
- It opens other business development possibilities for the firm and for the person.

An Employer's Perspective – What is the Impact of Study Abroad Programs on the Hiring Process?

Does it depend on the country and the employer's practice?

- It does not depend on the country but it does depend on the firm's practice.
- It can be useful to know a civil law system and it will probably apply the same principles in any country so you are able to read regulations and understand underlying principles.
- It does depend on the practice, however, you can make yourself an expert in such practice.

An Employer's Perspective – What is the Impact of Study Abroad Programs on the Hiring Process?

Does the language fluency matter?

- It definitely matters and mostly to be able to give the impression that you can communicate at the same level than any attorney in the country which you are dealing with.
- Creates a good impression with clients.
- Language challenges, and specifically of technical language are important.

Conclusions

- There is an increasing number of law students going on study abroad programs
- Schools offer more opportunities abroad each day because they see it as an important component of legal education
- Students look at the offering of study abroad when making a decision on what school to attend.

Conclusions

- Goal is to work together to maximize educational and career opportunities
- Communication is key and will facilitate the process of assisting students
- Must determine effective ways to educate employers about the advantages of study abroad programs
