

# Interviews

If your CV is successful and you are asked to go to an interview then you need to spend some time thinking about the types of questions the interviewers will ask and how you can answer them to show yourself in the most positive light whilst making use of lots of different examples to demonstrate how multi-faceted you are. Here are some types of questions that an interviewer could ask where a suitable answer would include details of your period abroad.

**Self-Awareness** – What was the most significant thing you learnt about yourself from your study abroad placement?

**Communication** – Give me an example of how your international experience has improved your skills in communicating with others. How might this make you a better professional in your field? When did you have to communicate information?

**Problem Solving** – Give me an example of a study abroad experience in which you had to resolve a conflict or solve a problem. What were the steps you take in reaching the solution? What skills and personal qualities did you need to use? What was the outcome?

**Initiative** – Give an example from your time abroad when you took the initiative to achieve a greater result.

**Resilience/Endurance** - Describe the biggest challenge in your life so far.

**Teamwork** – Give me an example from your period abroad when you had to work in a team, what were your responsibilities and what was the outcome.

Practice is the best way to revise for an interview! Find out the key skills or strengths that the company is looking for by browsing through their website, any promotional material they have given you and the job description. Write down these skills then think about, or use the internet to research, possible questions that you may be asked. Then go through the questions and think about the best way for you to respond that shows off the desired skills. An idea would be to use the STAR Method (S = Situation, T = Target, A = Action, R = Result) wherever possible – this method is perfect to market the skills acquired through your time abroad.

If you can, get a friend to ask you the questions and mark you on your response; focussing on:

- Are the answers given good examples to illustrate the skill asked about in the question?

- The manner in which you answer the questions; are you clear enough? Are you confident in your answers?
- Do you seem positive, confident and enthusiastic?

Below is a fictional example as to how the STAR method can be used in which the answers to questions revolve around experiences gained from studying/working abroad. Look out how the STAR method is utilised throughout, and think how you could apply it yourself to answer interview questions:

**Question: Talk about a goal you had and how you were able to achieve it?**

**Possible Answer:**

**Situation** - During my first year of University, I took a one year elective course in Beginner's German. Although I learnt a substantial amount of the language, I was still in no way capable of holding a conversation with a native German speaker. Due to my interest in the German language and culture, I chose to apply for the European Erasmus Exchange programme for one academic year at the University of Potsdam, Germany.

**Target** - As I now had the opportunity, I set myself the goal to become fluent in German by the end of my stay.

**Action** - Although I could have lived with other British students, I chose to flat share with another German student I met online, and therefore was regularly able to practice my language skills. Alongside this, I took further classes in German language study to deepen my learning.

**Result** - By the time I finished my studies in Germany, I could converse with ease, and am now capable of holding in depth conversations in German! This has greatly increased my confidence and has led me to explore further opportunities to study in Germany.

Your experience spent abroad either studying or working is the perfect example for many question scenarios that can occur during an interview. It is also the point where you can clearly differentiate yourself and stand out from the crowd who have not spent a period abroad. Take advantage of it!

Top tips for referencing your time abroad in an interview

1. Turn your problems into positives. If you were faced with a difficult situation, be it bad encounters, culture clashes, or even homesickness, turn these around into examples of how you dealt with these problems. Did you show initiative to combat these problems? Did you push yourself and show confidence to deal with any situations that arose?

2. The focus should be on results not just experiences – what did you gain from your period away? How has this impacted on your University studies?
3. Develop a set of cross cultural career related stories - did you have a group project with many multinational group members? Did you encounter any difficulties? Is there a specific story where you learnt a great deal?

Looking for jobs overseas? If you want country by country information on interview etiquette and processes, check out this specific **GoinGlobal** page ([http://www.goinglobal.com/en/topics-overview/?topic\\_id=13](http://www.goinglobal.com/en/topics-overview/?topic_id=13)) for a wealth of relevant information for many countries.