

# THE BENEFITS OF STUDY ABROAD

*– real facts from real experience*



JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®



## What practical advantages can a study abroad experience give you?

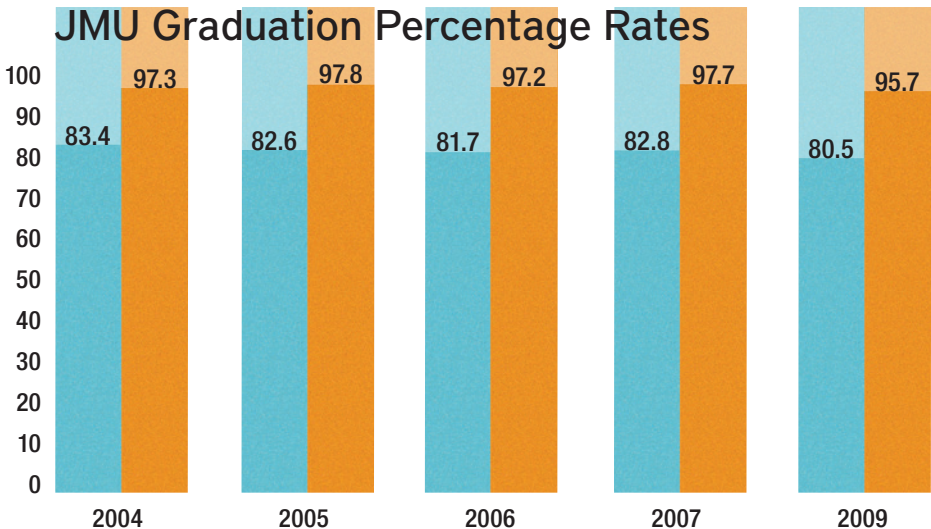
A compilation of recent studies and findings shows that:

25%

- College graduates who studied abroad earn 25% higher starting salaries than those graduates who did not study abroad. This equates to \$7,000 annually.
- 97% of study abroad students found employment within 12 months of graduation, when only 49% of college graduates found employment in the same period. That means study abroad graduates were twice as likely to find a job quickly.
- 84% of study abroad alumni felt their studies abroad helped them build valuable skills for the job market. A second study confirms this at 85%.
- GPAs for all students tend to rise as they approach the completion of their undergraduate degree. However, students who studied abroad saw their GPAs rise twice as quickly compared to students who stayed on their home campus. **JMU students who study abroad average a higher GPA – nearly 3% – than those who do not.**
- 59% of employers said study abroad would be valuable in an individual’s career later on with their organization.
- 90% of study abroad alumni who applied got into their first- or second-choice graduate or professional school.
- Students who studied abroad had a 17.8% higher four-year graduation rate than students who did not study abroad.
- African-American students who studied abroad had a 31.2% higher four-year graduation rate.

90%

### JMU Graduation Percentage Rates



All Undergraduates vs. Undergraduates who studied abroad (by entering class year).

■ All JMU Undergraduates
 ■ JMU Undergraduates who studied abroad



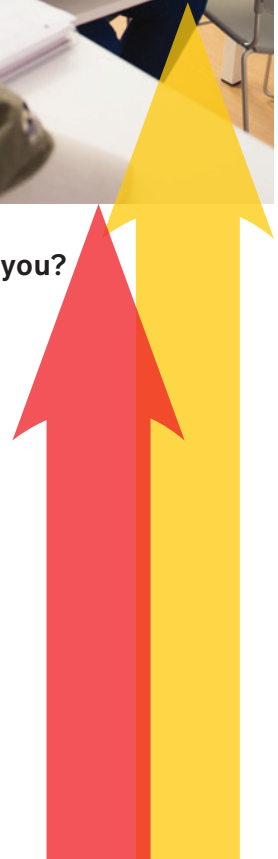
## What skills will a study abroad experience teach you?

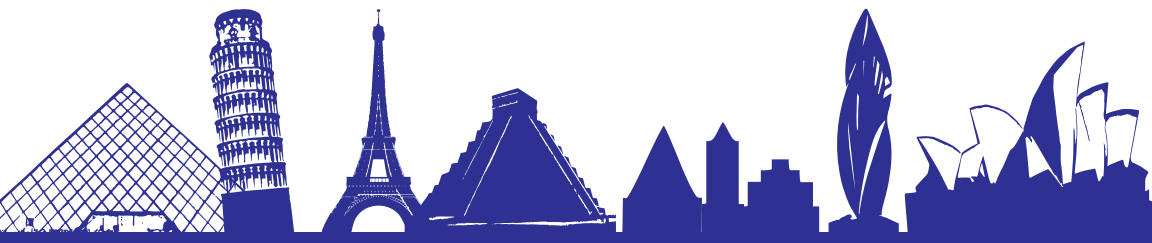
### Students who have had an international experience are

- Better problem solvers
- More flexible, creative, and complex thinkers
- More successful professionally
- More likely to create new businesses and products
- More likely to be promoted

### And study abroad enhances these key competencies:

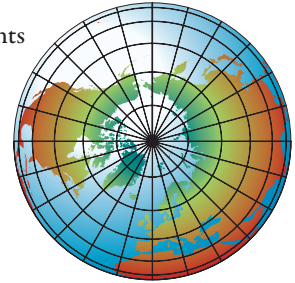
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Time management
- Open-mindedness
- Ability to deal with ambiguity





## Surveys of JMU students returning from study abroad programs find that they report:

- An increased sense of global awareness and interest in world events
- An increased interest in environmental issues
- An increased interest in other cultures and societies
- Less traditional views on the roles of men and women
- Greater openness to other religious systems and practices
- Greater awareness of their own beliefs and those of others
- Greater attention to the emotions of others
- More complex, critical thinking
- A greater sense of feeling “whole”—that their needs have been or are being met



In academic year 2013-14, 1,217 students studied abroad in 63 different programs.

## Study Abroad Destinations





# OIP MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of International Programs at James Madison University is committed to the principle that international experiences and perspectives are essential to any undergraduate and graduate education. The mission of the OIP is to promote and encourage a critical awareness of world issues; a knowledge of and appreciation for other cultures, languages and belief systems; a sense of global community; and a commitment to engagement at the international level, that we may educate active and responsible global citizens. To this end, the OIP is committed to providing, supporting and facilitating international experiences for students, faculty and staff at JMU and abroad.

## Years from now, how will that experience still inform your life?

A survey of students three to 45 years after their international experience found that:

- When participants were asked to rank a list of 12 college experiences in terms of impact, they ranked study abroad number one, above peer interactions and coursework (number two and three respectively). The list also included sports, clubs, student government, community service, and interaction with faculty, among other items.
- Participants reported their study abroad experience was directly related to their own sense of civic engagement, volunteerism, philanthropic activities, and social entrepreneurship.
- 60% enrolled in one or more advanced degree programs, and of those, 35% indicated an internationally oriented graduate program.
- Finally, 72% of participants reported that study abroad helped their career to “some” or “a large” degree.





This information originated in studies and surveys from the University of California (Merced), the University of Georgia, *Harvard Business Review*, the University of Virginia, the Forum on Education Abroad, *Intercultural Education*, and JMU's Office of International Programs. For complete details, please visit [www.jmu.edu/international](http://www.jmu.edu/international).



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