

WILL STUDYING ABROAD GIVE YOU AN ADVANTAGE?

Summary: Find out whether or not studying abroad in college is really worth it.



Question: I'm a junior international-business student with a minor in economics. With approximately three semesters left, my advisor has told me that this is the best time to go study abroad in accordance with my curriculum. How much will this really help me? Also, what language should I take? I have already taken two years of Spanish. German is the other option.

Answer: Some students regard their semester abroad as the most meaningful course in their curriculum. Others get by fine without it. If it's an option for you, give it strong consideration. As an international business student seeking a position in a global economy, any exposure to other cultures, governments, and business environments will be perceived by employers as an asset. In reality, this experience is likely, also, to broaden your perspective and contribute to your ability to flexibly manage in diverse settings. Negotiating travel in foreign countries is likely to be part of your future job, so saving some time to travel out of the country will add that skill to your repertoire.

Spanish and German are excellent language choices. You have a head start with your two years of Spanish, and trade with Latin America is growing.

To some degree, base your decision on your preference. If you have particular companies that you intend to target, consider their makeup and markets.

Combining knowledge of a particular language and culture, plus related travel, will complement your business/economics background. For example, if you study in England, be sure to capitalize on the opportunity to travel to German-speaking countries, if you decide to study German, or to Spain if you go with Spanish. While you're there, try to arrange a visit to a German or Spanish company to round out the experience.