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# THE STATISTICS OF STUDYING ABROAD

BY AMARENS ELISE / APRIL 21, 2015



*The kind of people that study abroad*

Going on an exchange has many benefits. I have noticed that since my year abroad, I have become a different person. I am more patient, I easily adapt to new situations. I can very easily accept it when things don't go the way I planned them to go. These however are very subjective things, and every exchange student depending on their personality, their experience and their attitude will learn different

things. These things are also very vague, because what exactly does it mean to be a 'different person', and what can it bring you in live?



To make the studying abroad experience a little more concrete for everybody, the [University of California](#) has summarized some of the existing studies on the statistics of studying abroad.

One thing that stands out is that almost all of these numbers are **positive numbers**.

For example, 90% of the students who had studied abroad got into their 1st or 2nd choice of grad school, and for those who are more interested in finding a job – you are twice as likely to find a job within 10 months if you have studied abroad ([2012 IES Abroad Recent Graduate Study](#)). Around 80% also found they had learned valuable skills during their time abroad and that the experience helped them better adapt to diverse working environments ([AIFS Study Abroad Outcome](#)).

However, these are still very vague definitions, and people like to see numbers. And as luck would have it, in the earlier mentioned study of IES one very concrete number came out:

Those who have studied abroad make on average **25% more** than those who haven't.

They earn on average \$7,000 more in starting salaries, compared to the general college graduate population. Over the course of one's life, in the United States this can add up to **\$567,000**. And that's a lot

of money. That is more than half a million. If you are interested, [here is a list](#) of what you can buy for that kind of money.

And to give an example for all the exchange students out there: Yes, you can buy a lot of food for that money.



What is interesting about this is how you interpret these statistics. Because does this mean that if you study abroad, you will automatically make 25% more than the 'general college population'?

First of all, these statistics are on average, so they are in no way a guarantee that you will actually make that kind of money after you graduate. However, this number is quite significant and I don't think you can call it a coincidence. Yet I think these statistics might not necessarily have anything to do with studying abroad, I think it has to do with the **kind of people who study abroad**.

Because the kind of people who study abroad are the ones that take initiative. They think outside the box, they take action, they are willing to adapt themselves to a new environment, willing to open themselves up to new situations. They are – yes I am becoming a little bit cheesy here – brave. They are a different kind of people and even though the experience of studying abroad probably only helped them

in developing these good characteristics, the fact that they were willing to study abroad already made them part of this special group of people, of which many people are already a part.

The question is – **are you?**

Because this group is endless. Although it is an elite group, it does not have boundaries. That is probably the main philosophy of exchange students: not knowing boundaries, or at least challenging them. These statistics are merely an extra piece of evidence of something that we already knew – that exchange students are awesome.

