

Study Abroad to

# INCREASE COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE

Learn how to get accepted to college or graduate school by studying abroad.



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Reality Check</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>How AmeriSpan Can Help</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>AmeriSpan Makes College More Affordable</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Add Standout Quality to Application &amp; Essay</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Use Video to Your Advantage</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Be Wary of Social Networking Sites</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>On to the Interview</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Use Real World Examples</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Get Remembered</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>7</b>



## Introduction

Studying abroad is an excellent way to improve your chances of getting into the college or graduate program of your choice. This e-report will tell you how and why you should study abroad, and give you the tools to enhance your application with your study abroad experience.

## Reality Check

### College Acceptance More Competitive Than Ever

Colleges are accepting lower percentages of applicants each year due to rising numbers of qualified graduating high school seniors. For example, the University of Notre Dame received 14,000 applications for 1,985 slots available last year. Ivy League schools accepted between 7.1% (Harvard) and 20.4% (Cornell) of their applicants in 2008.

**INFO: College acceptance is the lowest it has been in decades.**

### More College Graduates Staying in School

Graduate programs are accepting lower percentages of applicants due to the fact that many people can't find jobs after graduating from college or have been laid off. This translates to more people that are either staying in school or are going back to school to get a graduate degree.

### Paying for College is Tougher Than Ever

Paying for college is more challenging than ever before, with the stock market decline that has eroded college savings. With the current state of job losses, it is tougher to find summer jobs in order to save for college, as well.

### Foreign Language Requirements to Apply

More and more colleges are requiring applicants to have studied a foreign language prior to applying.

### Language Proficiency to Graduate

Graduate programs and colleges are increasingly requiring a level of foreign language proficiency in order to graduate.

## How AmeriSpan Can Help

### AmeriSpan Study Abroad Increases College and Graduate Acceptance

Colleges are often looking for a "standout" or special skill, experience, or talent. Speaking additional languages, studying abroad and/or volunteering abroad is a great way to set yourself apart when applying for college or graduate school.

Surveyed college admissions officers say if everything is equal, the applicant who studied abroad will get accepted over the one who has not.



# AmeriSpan Makes College More Affordable

## Earn Credit Before College

If you haven't been accepted to college, haven't chosen a college or have been accepted but haven't started your freshman year, you can still earn college credit in several ways:

1. **CLEP Exams** – You take a test and most colleges will accept CLEP exams. [Click for more info.](#)
2. **Credit for Language Classes** – You can enroll in Brookhaven College and earn lower level language credits for studying at AmeriSpan programs, approved by Brookhaven College. [Click for more info.](#)

You may be able to graduate faster and the cost per credit is significantly cheaper than taking classes on site.

## Earn Credit Economically In College

In most cases, credit earned from studying abroad can be significantly less expensive than credits from studying and living on campus. Credits are available in many subjects, not just languages when studying abroad.

### Ways to Obtain Credit:

1. **CLEP Exams** – You take a test and most colleges will accept CLEP exams. [Click for more info.](#)
2. **Credit for Language Classes** – You can earn from your own college or lower level credit from Brookhaven College. [Click for more info.](#)
3. **Credit for More Than Language Classes** – Pick an AmeriSpan College Study Abroad program and you will be able to earn credit in a variety of subjects from Foreign Universities.

## Financial Aid

Financial aid is available to those studying abroad who are enrolled in college not just if you are studying domestically. In fact, a college consortium agreement usually includes an estimate for out-of-pocket and travel to/from the country while you are studying.

## AmeriSpan Scholarships & Discounts

AmeriSpan offers a number of scholarships as well as a discount to those who have not been accepted to a college or graduate school or have been put on a wait list in the past six months. In addition, there are many other, non-AmeriSpan study abroad scholarships available to those who apply. [Click for more info.](#)

## Add Standout Quality to Application and Essay

If you've studied abroad, make sure to use it to your advantage on your college or graduate school application. Many applicants make the mistake of glossing over their study abroad experience. Avoid this by giving your experience a proper description, as it demonstrates initiative, independence and interpersonal skills, for example, the ability to adapt in different environments.

**With stiff competition**, it's best to have a serious stand-out quality to your application. Studying abroad, not to mention volunteering or interning abroad, can be your golden ticket to getting into the best school possible.

Many colleges use essay topics such as the following:

- Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you took, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
- Discuss an issue of personal, local, national or international concern and its importance to you.
- Think of a person who has had a significant influence on you and describe that influence.
- A range of academic interests, personal perspective and life experience adds much to your education. Describe an encounter that demonstrates the importance of diversity to you or what you would bring to the diversity of the college community.
- Topic of your choice.

All of these topics can be answered using your study abroad experience. Use your experience to highlight specific skills gained from surviving and learning in a foreign culture. Did you complete an internship or volunteer while abroad? What language skills did you gain while abroad? Did you live with a family or foreign students while abroad? Did you travel to other countries while studying abroad? How about special projects, field studies, volunteer work, awards, etc.? Use your experience to help set you apart and make an impression upon school admissions officials.

**Graduate admissions officers** say internships and relevant job experience are a strong positive when applying for graduate programs.

## Use Video to Your Advantage

A truly exciting way to add as stand-out quality to your college or graduate school application is to include video. There are a few websites popping up, such as [CollegeSupplement](#) that allow you to upload videos of yourself as a supplement to your application. Of course, there's always good old [YouTube](#) to upload your video, include a link on your application, and voila! Imagine how powerful a video of you working in a volunteer placement abroad, interacting with your homestay family, taking a language class, or even speaking the language while you interact with locals would be to convince college admissions officers that you are the best candidate for their school.

As admissions officers are overwhelmed, it's best to keep videos on the short side, but make sure they are long enough to highlight your strengths. CollegeSupplement allows up to three videos that are a maximum of three minutes long, and YouTube has a maximum of ten minutes. Also, make sure that the videos are *interesting*, as nobody wants to sit through ten minutes of you sitting in a tiny room blabbing about your experiences. Show interaction, maturity, and language skills, and you're good to go!

**INFO:** Taking a [gap year](#) to study abroad can increase your college acceptance rates.

## Be Wary of Social Networking Sites

Not surprisingly, school admissions officers are beginning to look at social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace to see what their applicants are really up to. In a recent survey, ten percent of admissions officers from top schools said they use these sites to help with evaluation. 38% of these officers said it had a negative impact, according to Kaplan Inc., the education services company that polled the officers.

This trend of checking up on prospective students will probably continue to grow steadily. Inappropriate photos, video, and comments can cast a very negative light on applicants. Fortunately, these sites do have privacy settings, so it's best to always keep your profiles set to private, and make sure that others aren't posting inappropriate pictures of you as well.

**Facebook and MySpace Tip:** Both Facebook and MySpace have privacy settings, so make sure your profiles set always to private. Do not allow others to post inappropriate pictures of you either!

# On to the Interview

## Use Real-World Examples

What better way to nail an interview than to give tangible, real world examples when answering questions? Some common interview questions include:

- What is your strongest/weakest point?
- What have you done to prepare for college?
- What has been your greatest experience in high school?
- What do you want to do in the future?
- Tell me about yourself.
- Tell me about your interests.
- Tell me about your involvement in extracurricular activities.
- Tell me about your family.
- What do you think about (insert a current event of the past week)?
- Who in your life has most influenced you?
- Tell me about a challenge that you overcame.

Many, if not all of the answers to these questions can be bolstered by a study abroad experience. Remember, you don't want to overload the admissions officer by *only* talking about your study abroad trip. Balance it by mentioning other interests and qualities that you can bring to the table. For example, if they ask you, "Tell me about yourself," (which is probably the first thing they will ask!) you should tell them about three things about you, one of which can be your study abroad experience and how it helped to shape who you are today.

## Get Remembered

Imagine yourself in the position of the interviewer: Hours, most likely days, spent listening to many, many people with the same answers to their questions. This is a perfect opportunity to highlight your study abroad experience to make the interviewer pay attention to you and remember you. Summer abroad in Spain? Volunteer experience in Guatemala? Either experience is sure to perk-up the ears of any admissions officer. Describing your host family in [La Manzanilla](#), for example, shows how adaptable and mature you are, and will make you more memorable to the admissions officer.

## Conclusion

In the highly competitive world of college and graduate school admissions, studying, volunteering, and interning abroad can give you the edge you need to stand out from the rest and get accepted.