

Effectively Communicating the Value of the International Plan

We believe that by participating in the International Plan, you will become a globally competent engineer, scientist, businessperson, or other professional, making you a more attractive job candidate. The IP is unique to GT, so employers will not know what it is unless you communicate all of the valuable things that you have learned as a result of participating in it. Most likely, you had fun abroad, traveled to new places, and met many interesting people along the way, BUT you should avoid focusing on this aspect of your international experiences. In order for you to convince employers that you are, in fact, globally-competent and a more desirable candidate than others, you should give some thought as to how you will demonstrate that you have gained certain critical skills, qualities, and knowledge that set you apart from others.

1) Explaining the International Plan in interviews

- a. How do you represent the IP on your resume? Are you making it a core component of your education? Which section do you put it in? EX: B.S. Electrical Engineering, International Plan
- b. If you've already interviewed, have you been asked about the IP? What feedback have you gotten?
- c. What is your elevator pitch about the IP? How might you explain the IP to...
 - i. A multinational employer for whom you will be based in the US but will likely have the chance to travel/work abroad and will have international counterparts (BP, Deloitte)?
 - ii. A domestic employer serving a mainly US customer base (Georgia Power, Comcast)?
 - iii. A foreign employer for whom you will work and live abroad (Deutsche Bahn, Carrefour)?
 - iv. Graduate school admissions officer in the US?
 - v. Graduate school admissions officer abroad?
- d. In an interview, you may or may not be asked directly about the IP or your international experiences. If you are not asked specifically to discuss these things, how might you weave it in to your personal narrative and interview answers?

2) Reflecting on what you've gained through the IP

- a. Remember that the IP is comprised of several components:
 - i. meaningful and extensive academically-related experiences abroad
 - ii. foreign language proficiency
 - iii. globally-focused coursework, including your Capstone
- b. How has your understanding of your major been affected by your IP experiences? Have you gained insight into how your discipline is practiced elsewhere? Are you aware of the cultural differences that may affect how you would practice your discipline in other settings?
- c. What personal characteristics or skills have you developed as a result of your participation in IP experiences? (See back for a list of possible skills and characteristics.) What specific examples do you have to demonstrate these?
- d. Think about how you went about adjusting to your host culture when you were abroad. How did you learn about your host culture and how did you adapt your behavior? How can you apply these behaviors, skills, and attitudes in future situations, including ones in the U.S.?

- e. What is your approach to working with people from other cultures? Have you had to work on a project or solve a problem with someone from a different background? What challenges did you face? What strategies did you use to get the project to successful completion? What did you learn from that experience?
- f. How did the globally-focused coursework broaden your understanding of international issues? Did the globally-focused coursework inform how you understand your major or how you understand the challenges of solving major-related problems in our highly interconnected world? Did the globally-focused coursework help you have a better experience abroad? Did the globally-focused coursework provide you with an opportunity to study diverse subjects and viewpoints that would not have been possible without the IP?
- g. How did learning and utilizing a foreign language affect your ability to interact with others when abroad? Did knowing a foreign language help you better understand your host culture? What did you learn about intercultural communication in general? Are you more empathetic toward non-native English speakers now that you've experienced being the "foreigner"?
- h. What does it say about you that you joined this program? Think about the level of commitment and follow-through that you have demonstrated by sticking with it and completing it.

What are Employers Looking For?

According to recent studies:

- 54% of American companies seek out prior international experience when hiring employees
- 62% of hiring managers look for candidates with a global perspective
- To many employers, "international experience" and "foreign language skills" are desirable because they are indicators that a job candidate has a global perspective, is culturally savvy, is willing to take risks, can work in diverse teams, and is open to new ideas.
- Even for employers that do not specifically advertise that they are looking for international experience, they still value the transferrable skills and qualities you may have gained through the IP. Focus on the transferable skills that you have gained through the IP.
- In some cases, international experience may not be required for an entry-level job, but may be necessary in order to be considered for more senior level positions in the future.

Top characteristics sought by employers*

- Expertise in your field (domain knowledge)
- Prior work experience
- Intercultural skills (e.g. working in diverse teams, cultural awareness and sensitivity, open-mindedness)
- Communication skills (e.g. verbal and written communication, foreign language skills)
- Advanced team work skills
- Personal, social, and cognitive skills (e.g. flexibility, adaptability, tolerance for ambiguity, analytical skills, problem-solving, relationship-building, integrity, motivation, initiative, self-reliance)

**Based on studies by RAND Corporation (1997), NACE (2007), British Council (2012), and Career Advisory Board (2013)*

Potential Skills, Qualities, and Knowledge Sets Gained through the IP

Skills

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate across barriers • Communicate with tact and diplomacy • Ability to collaborate with diverse teams • Ability to adapt to new environments • Ability to make transitions • Perform in an environment with adverse conditions • Function with a high level of ambiguity • Learn quickly • Learn through listening and observing • Can establish rapport in a culturally appropriate manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative problem-solving • Problem-solving with limited resources • Approach problems from multiple perspectives • Cross-cultural business savvy • Intercultural communication • Utilize time management skills • Willingness to take initiative • Critical thinking • Leadership • Foreign language proficiency • Expanded worldview • Function with a global perspective
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Qualities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative • Resourceful • Self-reliant • Appreciation for diversity • Flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertive • Inquisitive • Empathetic • Risk-taking • Cross-culturally aware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent • Open-minded • Self-aware • Innovative
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Knowledge Sets

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical global issues in your field of study • Global economics • International relations • Familiarity with a particular culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to practice your field in another culture or setting (i.e. issues to consider) • Cross-cultural business practices • Foreign language proficiency
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- **Which of these skills, qualities, and knowledge sets have you developed through the IP?**
- **How can you demonstrate that?**

The STAR technique - Framework for developing demonstrative vignettes

- a. Situation – what was the context of the problem (who, what, where, when)?
- b. Task – what specifically did you need to do and what were the challenges you faced?
- c. Action – what action did you take to resolve the problem? This should demonstrate the skills, traits, and knowledge you drew on without specifically naming them.
- d. Result – what was the result of your action and what did you take away from it?

From the Mouths of Those in the Know

“Having a significant level of international experience is viewed by industry as a requirement for consideration. Even in the recent past, international experience would have been a differentiating factor, but today this is a must-have. If a candidate cannot work well globally, his or her chances at gaining employment at a multinational corporation are slim. I look for candidates who have traveled extensively and preferably worked in a foreign country in an internship or co-op. Beyond that, I also want to see candidates who think globally. This frame of mind is one open to new experiences, open to travel, open to diverse cultures and diverse thinking, and most importantly, one with a strong natural curiosity.”

- John Fowler, ISS Technology Development, Lexmark International

“In today’s business environment, there are few companies who do not have an international reach. Successful business professionals have the experiences and perspectives to work in any business environment both in the United States and abroad. We are looking to hire and develop professionals who are ready to add value in San Francisco, Sydney, or Shanghai.”

- KPMG Campus, Preparing for your Global Career

“A new and up-and-coming skill is global competence, or the ability to do business in a wide variety of cultures and countries. And this is something that traditionally only multinational firms looked for and they only looked for it at the senior level. There are several ways that you can showcase your global experience, if you have any. One of the ways is to talk about times that you might have studied abroad or traveled abroad. Any time that you have the opportunity to interact with colleagues in different countries. Maybe you have managed a project that was done overseas or included colleagues that were in many different areas of the world. That’s all global expertise. Even something as simple as reading The Economist on a daily basis and really having a good handle of the industry news that’s going on globally and that affects your company, those are really good ways to showcase that you are aware of the fact that there is a world beyond the U.S. and that we need to be concerned about it.”

- Alexandra Levit (Career Advisory Board) on hiring trends in 2013