

# Top 10 Reasons Turkish Students Study Abroad

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According to the opinion of many Turkish business executives, an overseas education lends prestige, and gives those that go abroad an edge over the competition. Turkish families understand the vital role education plays in securing a future for their children and it is a well-known fact that the job market in Turkey is rapidly growing. One might say that studying abroad is the best thing a Turkish student can do whilst in college. The top 10 reasons Turkish students study abroad:

### 1. Language fluency

Turkish students begin studying English language as early as primary school and most continue into college sometimes through graduation and still often never gain fluency or comfort in speaking. If they don't speak with native speakers on a regular basis, if they don't suffer through the awkward language-barrier situations that fill the study abroad experience, then they're never going to be truly fluent. Finding themselves in uncomfortable situations and trying to learn, is the only way to truly grasp the language and retain it.

### 2. Studying abroad is the best option!

In Turkey, often the cost of studying at a private university can be equal to or less than the price of studying abroad. Since the cost of education in Turkey varies and space within universities is limited – sometimes studying abroad is the only choice. Approximately 1.9 million Turkish students take the National University Placement Test each year; of these students only 800,000 entrance positions are available in domestic institutions. Therefore less than 40% of students are successful at enrolling at a domestic university – a critical shortage of university placements lends to more than 28% of all college students spending a semester or more abroad.

### 3. Market demand

With globalization, governments and corporations find it increasingly difficult to ignore communication challenges and seek to create bridges between markets. As the internet is increasing dissolving the boundaries on maps, even the smaller businesses in Turkey prefer bilingual employees. If students want to stand out in today's job market, if they want to be relevant, an international perspective is critical. When students speak two languages fluently it opens the doors for jobs domestically and abroad. Since the number of college graduates and the number of jobs available are not increasing at equal rates it is critical for students to gain an edge on the competition. In fact, researchers predict only 2.3% in jobs increase from 2012 to 2013; however, there will be 6.3% more graduates.

### 4. Gaining a new appreciation for one's home country

Even the most open-minded study abroad students will be unable to avoid comparing their host country with their home country. Sometimes, students make the realization that they miss the comforts of home more than they like the new country. Whether it's small stuff like mom's cooking or big stuff like constantly getting lost, many students return home with a new appreciation. Many students take the new ideas and ways of life back to their home country and incorporate them with the old traditions. Either way the experience expands the way they think and changes their lives.

## **5. Understand major in a new way**

Many students don't limit themselves to language courses. Instead they go abroad to study history, engineering, architecture or biology, gaining a new perspective—and maybe even a great thesis idea. In the new country they can get a different perspective on something they were already studying. Sometimes going abroad and sitting in on specialized classes, attending lectures, joining clubs and events to broaden horizons and motivate students to begin a career. Some may even get an internship in their field while abroad, which leads to a job.

## **6. Broaden horizons**

Study abroad is not a short-term experience. It will shape students for the rest of their lives. They'll know the country intimately, learn to speak the language and gain an appreciation for its people. Back home they will recognize films from their host country, restaurants that serve its dishes and books by its authors. They'll have more familiarity with locations and regions when mentioned on the news or when they hear a snippet of its language on the street. They'll have lived in it, and it will continue to live in them.

## **7. Expand networks**

College is a time where students are exposed to incredible people—the thinkers of the next generation. When abroad, students will gain exposure to not only other students from around the globe but locals as well, getting those contacts for their future which may be invaluable. The opportunity to expand new friendships could be rewarded with lifelong connections that could lead to business relationships or valuable friendships.

## **8. Gaining invaluable life skills**

The skills gained while studying abroad last a lifetime. The traditional Turkish student lives at home until they are married. While studying abroad, it is often the first time they will live outside of the family home. Many students go back home with the personal benefits of studying abroad including increased self-confidence, sense of independence, self-sufficiency, patience, cross-cultural communication skills and a willingness to take on new challenges.

## **9. Learning adaptability**

*“Studying abroad can be a wonderfully enriching experience. Success in business requires focus, improvisation, flexibility, and adaptability. Learning in a foreign environment brings with it new perspective and context that will likely change your world view. It is often said that study abroad is a “life changing” experience—by participants, their peers, and their parents.” -Charles H. Whiteman, John and Becky Surma Dean.*

## **10. Life changing experience**

Studying abroad, for any period of time, is a highly rewarding experience. Independent research reveals that the longer a student studies abroad the greater the academic, career, cultural and personal benefits will be. According to Lance Kenney, Director of International Programs at Villanova University, “Studying abroad can have a profound effect on how you view the world and your place within it. It takes you out of your comfort zone and continuously challenges you. As an individual, you will develop independence and self-reliance.” In conclusion, the experiences and skills students develop abroad will help them mature both personally and academically, and will improve career prospects.