

memo executive summary

academic year 2012-2013

SAMPLE REPORT

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. How Does the Outgoing Class Look?

The *Sample University* student group reveals some rather characteristic distributions. The overrepresentation of **female students** (65%) as well as a **dominant academic family background** (59%) are typical in the context of student mobility. In the study abroad class of 2012-2013, the group of female students with an academic family background is dominant, which means that the cohort is rather homogeneous.

The outgoing class of the Sample University (SU) was dominated by female students with an academic

The *Sample University* is also typical for the fact that students with health or physical impairments (3%) are a small minority among those studying abroad. Nevertheless, the percentage is higher than among the closest peers and the **memo** average. We hope that in future surveys more students in this group will participate and generate a sample large enough to compare their performance to students without impairments.

Impaired students are a minority amongst the outgoing SU class

The data reveals certain socio-economic biases within the study abroad students in the following aspects. Over 50% of students rely mainly on their **parents/family support** and another 15% and 11% of students rely largely on **income through work and scholarships**, respectively, to finance their studies at the *Sample University*. For the majority of students, financing their studies seems to be a combination of relying on family support, scholarships, and work. When compared to their peers at other institutions, students from the *Sample University* tend to be less dependent on their families' financial support and scholarships and more dependent on personal income through work and loans.

Outgoing SU students depend more on their own income and loans to finance their studies than at peer HEIs

The picture remains similar when looking at financing for study abroad programmes. Here, the vast majority plans to rely on financial support from their parents as a major or relevant source of funding while abroad, which is consistent with the dominant academic family background. This usually translates into substantially higher household income, as well as a stronger willingness to support such undertakings as study abroad. They also plan to use scholarships for funding. It is noteworthy that 50% of students used their own income from work to at least partially cover the costs of studying abroad. The post-stay survey confirms the importance of scholarships and family support in financing, while personal income through work in the host country also becomes a more important source of funding than before.

Outgoing students are dependent on family support and scholarships when studying abroad

The students' self-assessment of their school performance paints a picture of **above average scholastic achievement**. A majority of 62% students located themselves in the top third of their class, 35.9% claimed they were in the average of their class, and only 2.1% said they belonged to the bottom third of their year.

Outgoing SU students have above average scholastic performance

Students from the *Sample University* show **similar levels of knowledge of foreign languages** when compared to students at the closest peer institutions and the **memo** average. 44.8% of the outgoing students claim to know two languages besides their mother tongue, while 27.2% know three or more other languages. As in other peer institutions, however, only a third of students (33.2%) attended language preparatory courses prior to their departure, despite the fact that many students face difficulties when communicating in the language of the host country.

Outgoing SU students show similar levels of language knowledge as their peers at the closest HEIs

The *Sample University* study group shows that students have **close links to family without much responsibility for the care of children and elders**. Almost half of the students are in a relationship. 45% of students are involved in cultural/artistic activities and 65% take part in sports. There is not a very substantial involvement in volunteer activities. The percentage of participation in cultural and volunteer activities is lower than that of the closest peer institutions, but participation in sports is higher.

SU outgoing students report close links to family but not much family responsibility

We know from other studies that the duration of a study abroad programme influences the effects that the experience may have on students. In the case of the *Sample University*, 3.3% of the outgoing class was abroad for less than two months, **45.6% for three up to six months** and 36.3% were abroad for six months and more. The major destinations of the students were South Europe, the United Kingdom and Ireland, North America, and France. Almost 70% of students went abroad with the **ERASMUS** programme, more than the **memo** average of slightly over 50%. We also see that 47.6% of the students attended **various preparatory courses**, similar to both the closest peer numbers and the average. We have no knowledge of whether these courses were mandatory or optional. Nevertheless, the distribution of participants and non-participants and the duration of the stay abroad provides us with the option to compare, in the following chapters, these different groups in terms of their pre-departure perceptions and attitudes as well as the changes that took place abroad. In other words: do pre-departure orientation programmes make a difference? Do longer durations of time abroad make a difference? One major caveat is, of course, the diversity of destination countries from the *Sample University*; distortions produced by country effects cannot be discerned or controlled, due to the small quantity of data.

Most SU students go abroad for one semester (45.6%)

Overall, the data indicate two phenomena in terms of diversity. On the one hand, the outgoing group of the *Sample University* turns out to have several predominant characteristics. The most common traits are **female gender, academic family background and good academic standing**. On the other hand, these results also indicate that the *Sample University* might consider some improvements in order to **make international experiences more accessible and inviting for “non-traditional” students**.

Major lessons learned...

The socio-metric data of the class provides the survey with some filter information that can be used in the analysis of perceptions and attitudes to take a closer look at certain groups in the next section.

1.2. What Does the Outgoing Class Think?

Overall, the outgoing class of the *Sample University* of 2012-2013 handled the academic requirements of their studies very well, and the students were generally satisfied with the social dimension of their studies (contact to fellow students and professors).

Prior to their time abroad, the majority of students (71.5%) reported **satisfaction with the organisation of the study programme at their home institution**, a level slightly higher than the results obtained from the closest peer institutions. After returning from abroad, the students were questioned about their level of satisfaction with the organisation of studies at their host university, and here the approval rate differs dramatically compared with their pre-study answers. There is a substantial decrease in the approval ratings of the organisation of the host institutions. Only 11.5% of students from the *Sample University* reported satisfactorily on the **organisation of their study programme while abroad**. Whereas the average satisfaction level with the organisation of study abroad programmes tends to be very low with a **memo** average of 14.5%, the level of dissatisfaction observed by the students from the *Sample University* is lower still. Another perception affected to a great extent by the study abroad experience was that of the **workload** in study programmes: while 60.8% of students felt that the workload was not too high prior to the study period, 69.1% of students shared that opinion after studying abroad.

An important aspect with respect to a stay abroad is the **available support provided by the home and the host institutions**. While only 29.7% of students were really satisfied with the support provided by their home institution in **academic issues**, slightly more than half of the students indicated that the “support was available, but too limited.” With respect to **other matters** (support in finding a way around the city/country, finding a job, balancing family life and academic life, balancing work and studying and support regarding health problems), the results show that 20.5% of students claimed abundant availability of support from the university, while the majority claims that no support in this area is necessary.

Lower levels of satisfaction were reported concerning **additional support** (financial and organisational/administrative) offered by the home university, where students from the *Sample University* tended to perceive support as limited. 12% of students claimed they received substantial financial support from their home university and 32.5% claimed to have received much administrative support.

After returning from their stay abroad, students from the *Sample University* indicated that they perceived slightly less support from their host institutions than they did at their home institution. 26.4% of students felt that support was available in abundance, while another 46.8% said that support was available, but limited. This is similar to the **memo** averages, which generally relate slightly higher levels of available support from home institutions than from host institutions. Students from the *Sample University* also assessed the support in non-academic matters to be less satisfactory than in the pre-stay survey and also lower than the **memo** average for this category (16.6% compared with the average of 17.7%). A higher percentage (58.1%) claimed that they did not need any support from their host institutions. So, a **higher level of dissatisfaction with the organisation of the study programme at the host institution and a lower level of support overall** was offered. This reveals a general necessity not only for study abroad programmes to improve on their organisation, but also for

Outgoing SU students were dissatisfied with the organisation of the study programme at host HEIs

Studying abroad reduced complaints about the workload amongst the outgoing students

Only 29.7% of outgoing SU students were fully satisfied with support in academic issues at their home university

SU students reported a higher level of dissatisfaction with the amount of overall support offered at the host HEIs

the home institution to provide outgoing students with different or more preparation before they depart for their stay abroad.

Other aspects of evaluation were related to previous international experience, students' attitudes towards teamwork and their international orientation. The outgoing class from the *Sample University* can be described as showing a **considerable international orientation** and a great propensity to engage with other cultures and to make new experiences in an international setting. More than half of the outgoing students (54.36%) had previous international experience(s), a figure close to that of similar institutions and slightly higher than the **memo** average. The pronounced international orientation of students from the *Sample University* also reveals that about 80% divulged that going abroad was more important than finishing their studies in their home country within the stipulated timeframe.

54.4% of outgoing SU students had previous international experience

Compared to the strong international orientation of the 2012-2013 group, the students' propensity for **teamwork** appears to be less pronounced. Although benefits of teamwork were acknowledged, 54.3% reported that they work better and more productively by themselves than in a team and feel under pressure if the results of their teamwork are assessed even after their time abroad. The majority of students surveyed preferred teams that didn't result from a random composition of students (62.8%). This trend is reflected within the closest peer institutions and the **memo** average, where this pattern is also distinctive.

The outgoing students of the *Sample University* indicated six major **motivations** as important in their decision to go abroad: the acquisition or furthering of a foreign language (69.6%), preparation for an international career (52.2%), exposure to new ideas and processes in the field of study (44.2%), interest in the culture, history and landscape of the host country (43.9%), improvement of their chances of finding a job in their home country (33.7%) and opportunities for networking and developing friendships abroad (27.5%). They were both personally and academically motivated to go abroad.

SU outgoing students named learning a foreign language as the top motivator for studying abroad

The last aspect of evaluation to be analysed in this chapter is related to the **support students received for their decision to go abroad**. As could be expected, it has been found that they are strongly supported in their decision by existing exchange options, their family and friends and members of their university. However, the level of support offered by the sending and the hosting institution appears to leave room for improvement.

1.3. What Does the Outgoing Class Experience?

The findings presented in this chapter show that different groups of students bring different behaviors and attitudes to the table. Within some of the parameters surveyed, we can observe great differences between sets of students, whereas within others the differences do not vary much from the **memo** factors and the total index. These results illustrate how multi-layered students are: they do not only diverge on socio-demographic or performance indicators, but also in terms of their attitudes and behavior. **These differences originate prior to the students' study abroad programmes and influence the possible results of their time abroad immensely. This means that the lower the initial values of the memo factors are, the more support the study programme needs to provide in order to achieve higher results.** This is why we offer group-specific analyses that can be used to improve student support services prior to and throughout the stay abroad.

There are also differences in the post-stay survey values and in the change rates, depending on the different filters we set, of the various groups. However, it should be noted that, despite the striking differences between some groups of students, it is impossible to attribute causality based on the results presented here. Attitudinal differences between men and women can be (and most likely are) caused, reinforced or mediated by factors other than gender, such as differences in socio-economic status, different socialization or experiences, etc. Identifying cause and effect becomes even more difficult when less rigid social categories than gender or academic family background – which do not commonly change in the course of a students' life – are concerned. Social relations or activities are by their nature fluid, flexible and impermanent. It is possible, for example, that students who are involved in volunteer work develop a number of social and personal skills through these activities, but it is equally possible that students with certain character traits are more likely to actively seek volunteer activities. More likely still is a mutually reinforcing relationship between volunteering and performance on the **memo** factors.

Outgoing SU students have slightly better pre-departure **memo** values when compared to peer HEIs

Whereas **memo** provides higher education institutions with valuable insights into the differences between groups of students and therefore into which areas and for which groups of students they can or should improve their services, the above caveat is to emphasize that students are not infinitely malleable. Differences on some factors are normal, expected and even desirable.

SU students had the same initial **memo total** score as the **memo** average value

The results presented in this section also show that a stay abroad does not carry the same value and benefits for all groups of students. Some groups of students are “winners” both in the pre- and post-stay abroad survey, while others do not bring the best attitudinal prerequisites to the table at the outset, but then derive considerable benefits from a stay abroad.

Prior to their stay abroad, students from the *Sample University* performed better or the same than the closest peer institutions on nine of the **memo** factors, with the exception of *Tolerance of Ambiguity*. Their **memo total** score was slightly higher than that of the closest peer institutions and the same as the **memo** average.

After the stay abroad, the students scored better or equal to the closest peer institutions on nine of the ten factors. There was a statistically significant positive change on *Self-Efficacy*. These results may all be indicators of a positive experience abroad, which actively involved them and allowed them to become acquainted with people with different cultural backgrounds and ideas. **At the end, students from the Sample University are in the average with respect to the **memo total** and performed better than students at the closest peer institutions on nine of the ten factors examined.**

Outgoing SU students performed better on average than students from the closest HEIs after their stay abroad

More importantly, 51% of the sample students increased their initial pre-departure **memo total.** In other words, more than half of the students increased their skills related to study success, intercultural competence and employability through their stay abroad. These results will be elaborated on in the following sections regarding gender, academic background, participation in a preparatory course, duration of time spent abroad, type of exchange programme, voluntary work, relationship status and level of previous international experience to gain a clearer understanding of how the students were affected by their time abroad.

Gender

In this section, the differences in the perceptions of students will be analysed by gender. In terms of **programme organisation**, both male and female students rated their satisfaction of the organisation of their home institution in similar terms before they went abroad. In the post-stay survey, women were slightly more satisfied with the organisation of the study programmes at host institutions, although both genders reported a significant decrease in their approval. The post-stay survey also reveals that both genders were equally satisfied with the participation possibilities and social support in their studies at the host institution (compared to the home institution). Additionally, both male and female students from the *Sample University* assessed the **workload** in the host institution as less demanding than the workload at their home institution.

Female students from SU needed more support prior to departure

Male students became more inclined towards working in groups after spending time abroad

At the *Sample University*, male students were more satisfied than female students with **support regarding academic and other matters**. After their stay abroad, however, men reported a slightly higher percentage of dissatisfaction with the limited non-academic support they could find than women (26% to 23%, respectively). In the case of **support in academic matters**, male and female students reported the same levels of support after their time abroad.

Male students reported an increased desire to work abroad after studying internationally

In regard to students' attitudes towards **teamwork**, no differences were found between the genders in the pre-stay survey. Afterwards, however, male students' perspectives became more positive.

In terms of their **international orientation**, male and female students differed significantly from each other in terms of international career prospects (women reported higher prospects) and a desire to complete their degrees within the stipulated timeframe at the sacrifice of going abroad (men had higher scores in this category). After their stay abroad, the desire to work outside of their country of origin increased among male students and decreased among female students.

Regarding the **motivations** for going abroad, the differences between male and female students of the outgoing class of the *Sample University* are minor. Females tend to be motivated more by communications and networking considerations, while men are slightly more driven by academic and professional goals. This seems to be rather typical when compared to the closest peer institutions and **memo** averages.

Analysing the **memo** factors by gender reveals clear differences. **Male students scored higher on seven factors before they went abroad**, including *Resilience*, *Disputability*, *Decisiveness*, *Tolerance of Ambiguity*, *Self-Efficacy*, *Vigor* and *Serenity*. Out of these factors, there were statistically significant differences in *Resilience*, *Disputability*, *Decisiveness*, *Self-Efficacy* and *Tolerance of Ambiguity*. They also scored significantly higher on their **memo total** than female students (6.81 to 6.68, respectively).

After their stay abroad, males improved their scores on six of the ten factors. They saw decreases in their scores in *Confidence*, *Self-Efficacy*, *Disputability* and *Resilience*, but these decreases were very minor. The **memo total** change from pre- to post-stay surveys was 0.11, similar to the closest peer institutions (0.10), but less than the **memo** average (0.20).

Both female and male SU students improved their **memo total** scores by the same amount during their time abroad

The female students' **memo total** scores also improved by 0.11. They improved on eight of the factors, stayed the same on one, and declined on one. There were statistically

significant improvements in *Disputability, Decisiveness, Curiosity, Self-Efficacy, Tolerance of Ambiguity* and *Confidence*.

Academic Background

Differences determined among students who do and do not have an academic family background will be examined in this section. Only a few differences were discovered concerning the students when they were grouped according to this distinction.

With regard to the students' assessment of the **organisation of the study programme**, the only difference found in the pre-stay survey between the student groups is that those without an academic background were happier with the participation possibilities in their programme. Both groups of students rated the organisation and workload in similar terms. In the post-stay survey, both students with and without an academic background recorded a decrease in satisfaction with the organisation of the study programme and claimed that the **workload** was less than at their home institutions. Students whose parents had attended university saw a marginal increase in participation possibilities during their time abroad, while those whose parents did not attend university saw a slight decrease in participation possibilities.

Students with an academic family background found it harder to find **academic support** in their home institutions (50%) than students without an academic family background (47%). In non-academic matters, students from both groups found it equally difficult to find support. After their time abroad, students whose parents had not attended university found it slightly harder to find support in academic contexts, while students whose parents had not attended university had a more difficult time finding support in other matters.

In regard to the students' attitudes towards **teamwork**, those without an academic background were statistically significantly more favourable of group work than their peers with an academic background. However, neither group looked especially highly on group work. After their stay abroad, those with an academic family background became more in favour of group work, but both groups saw a decline in their thoughts on the success of international groups and the random composition of groups.

Students with an academic background reported a significantly higher amount of **previous international experience** than their peers. There were no differences to be found between the groups' international career prospects. Both groups scored the same when asked whether they would like to live and work in their home countries. After their time abroad, students whose parents went to university saw stronger growth in their positive international orientation than their peers whose parents did not go to university. Both groups saw decreases in the desire to work and live in their home countries after their stay abroad, but students without an academic background saw more of a decline.

Regarding the **motivation to go abroad**, both sets of students named similar motivations. They both cited communication and networking reasons as their top motivation to study internationally, followed by academic and professional goals and a number of motivations labelled under the category "Other."

Outgoing students with an academic background had more problems finding academic support at home; students without an academic background found it slightly harder to find academic support abroad

SU students without an academic background were much more in favour of group work before going abroad

SU students with an academic background had much higher levels of previous international experience

Both students with and without academic backgrounds scored the same on their **memo total** values before going abroad

Regarding the pre-departure results, there are not any significant differences between students who have an academic family background and those who do not. Both groups have a *memo total* of 6.72, which is very close to the peer institutions' scores but less than the *memo* average scores of 6.85 (students with an academic background) and 6.81 (students without an academic background).

After their stay abroad, students with an academic family background saw statistically significant improvements on six factors (*Disputability*, *Decisiveness*, *Curiosity*, *Sociality*, *Self-Efficacy* and *Tolerance of Ambiguity*) and their *memo total* score. They improved on nine of the *memo* factors, excluding *Resilience* where they saw a decrease of -0.02. Their *memo total* change was 0.12, compared to 0.11 at the closest peer institutions and the *memo* average of 0.18.

Students without an academic family background witnessed a change of 0.11 in their *memo total* score. They improved on eight of the factors, except *Sociality* and *Resilience*, where their score decreased slightly. In addition, they reported statistically significant increases on four of the factors: *Decisiveness*, *Vigor*, *Curiosity* and *Tolerance of Ambiguity*. **Overall, students with an academic background witnessed 9.1% more improvement on their *memo total* score than students without an academic background after their stay abroad.**

SU students with an academic background scored 9.1% higher than students without an academic background on the *memo* values after returning from abroad

Participation in Preparatory Courses

The differences found between students who participated in a preparatory class and those who did not will be analysed in this section. Regarding the assessment of the **organisation of the study programme** at the home institution, there were no differences between those who did and those who did not attend a preparatory course. After their time abroad, both groups saw a decrease in satisfaction with the programme organisation, with those who did not participate in a preparatory course being less satisfied than their participating peers. All of the students saw a decrease in terms of the **workload** expected by the host institutions compared to the home institutions.

A higher percentage of students who attended a prep course received more financial support from their home university than those who did not attend

Students of the *Sample University* who attended a preparatory course seemed to regard **support in academic matters** as slightly harder to find than their counterparts who did not attend a preparatory course at their home university. In both groups about 30% of students found support in non-academic matters to be too limited. After their stay abroad, both groups reported similar amounts of support in academic and other matters at their host institutions. A higher percentage of students who had not attended a preparatory course reported that they received no financial support from their home university (35%) than those who did attend the course (31%). With regard to additional administrative and organisational help, those who attended the preparatory course generally said that they received more help than those who did not attend.

SU students who participated in a prep course were more inclined to work in groups after their stay abroad than their peers

In relation to students' attitude towards **teamwork**, both groups of students had approximately the same views in the pre-stay survey. This changes a bit after the students' stay abroad. Students who participated in a preparatory course became more favourable of group work in general than their peers. They also became less inclined to groups that had been composed randomly.

Students who took part in a prep course reported a higher increase in their international orientation than students who had not participated

Both groups showed the same levels of **positive international orientation** and desire to live and work in their home countries in the pre-stay survey. After studying abroad, students who took part in a preparatory course saw more of an increase in their international orientation than their fellow students who had not participated in such a course. This latter group saw more of a decrease in the desire to live and work abroad in the future.

Students who attended a preparatory course cited communications and networking reasons as their main **motivation** to go abroad, while students who had not attended a preparatory course named academic and professional goals as their top motivator for a stay abroad. These were statistically significant differences, showing that students who attended a preparatory course have significantly different reasons for going abroad than their peers who did not attend a preparatory course.

Outgoing SU students who did and did not participate in a prep course performed similarly on their **memo totals** pre-departure

When looking at preparation levels for a study abroad experience, it is natural to conclude that those students who had attended a preparatory course would feel more prepared for their stay. This is the case with the students from the *Sample University*. Those who had taken a class reported that they felt statistically significantly more prepared than their peers who had not participated. This shows that it is very important to encourage students to take preparatory courses prior to leaving for their time abroad.

The analysis of pre-stay values by preparatory course shows that students from the *Sample University* who did not attend a preparatory course performed better on only three of the **memo** factors (*Confidence*, *Self-efficacy* and *Serenity*) than their fellow students who did participate in a preparatory course. The **memo total** prior to the stay abroad is similar for both groups of students (6.71 for those who participated in preparatory courses and 6.70 for those who did not participate).

Students who participated in a prep course improved 10% more on their **memo total** score than students who did not participate after their stay abroad

After their stay abroad, students from the *Sample University* who participated in a preparatory course saw statistically significant increases on *Decisiveness*, *Tolerance of Ambiguity*, *Curiosity* and their **memo total**. They improved on eight of the ten factors, excluding *Serenity* and *Resilience*. The change on the **memo total** score (0.11) was the same as the closest peer institutions and the **memo** average scores.

Students who did not participate in a preparatory course saw improvements on nine of the ten **memo** factors. There were statistically significant increases on *Disputability*, *Decisiveness*, *Curiosity* and the **memo total**. The change in the **memo total** of 0.10 was the same as the change in the scores at similar institutions but less than the **memo** average change of 0.14. **Based on both groups memo total changes, we find that students who took part in a preparatory course improved 10% more than their peers who did not participate after they returned from studying abroad.**

Duration of Stay Abroad

This section discusses the differences found in the perceptions of students based on the length of their time abroad. The **level of organisation of the study programme** in the pre-stay survey was generally favourably assessed by all of the students, regardless of how long they planned to stay abroad. They all reported a decrease in satisfaction with organisation at their host institutions, but the students who stayed abroad from three to six months were the most unsatisfied. All of the students also saw a decline in the **workload** while they were abroad.

When judging the amount of support they received before they went abroad, the students whose stay abroad was less than three months and between three and six months felt slightly more that **academic support** was limited than their peers who studied abroad longer than six months. In **support in other matters** (finding a job, flat, etc.) it was easier for students who spent less than three months abroad than their peers who spent a longer time abroad to find support. After their time abroad, students who studied for more than six months in a different country reported it was harder to find support in academic matters than their peers who stayed abroad for shorter periods. Again, it was easier for students who were abroad for less than three months to find support in other matters. A higher percentage of those who spent less than three months abroad (37%) reported **much financial support** than those who studied abroad between three to six months (10%) and more than six months (12%). However, more students who studied between three to six months internationally (34%) claimed that they received “much support” in **administrative and organisational matters** when compared to the students who were abroad longer than six months (31%) or less than three months (12%).

It was easier for students who spent 6 months or more abroad to find academic support

Students who spent less than 3 months abroad said it was easier to find support in non-academic matters than students who went abroad for longer

Students who spent between three to six months abroad generally found it easier to **find information** on academic aspects (including information on courses and responsible personnel) before their stay than their peers who stayed at least six months. After their time abroad, however, the opposite was found to be true, with those students who stayed longer claiming it was easier to find information.

All of the students exhibited similar (not very favourable) attitudes towards **teamwork** and international groups in the pre-study survey, but in the post-study survey students who had stayed abroad three to six months saw the biggest positive change in how they viewed the success of international groups and their feelings on the random composition of groups.

Students who studied abroad for less than 3 months reported much higher levels of financial support than their peers who stayed abroad longer

In the pre-stay survey, students who were planning to go abroad for more than six months had statistically significantly higher levels of **positive international orientation** when compared to students who wanted to go abroad for a shorter period. The students who planned to stay abroad between three and six months had a significantly higher desire to live and work at home when compared to the other two groups of students. In the post-stay survey, all three groups increased their international orientation (the students who were abroad less than three months saw the largest increase). Those who lived abroad for longer than six months claimed an increase in desire to live and work in their home country, while students who lived abroad for shorter periods experienced a decline in this category.

Students who went abroad for more than 6 months showed the highest levels of international orientation in the pre-stay survey

Although the results of their **motivations** are similar, students who studied for three to six months abroad and over six months abroad cited communications and networking reasons as their biggest motivator for going abroad by a narrow margin, while those who studied for six months or more named academic reasons. The students who studied less than three months abroad named both academic and professional goals and communications and networking reasons as equally motivating.

In terms of preparation for a stay abroad, the students who studied internationally for less than three months felt that they were unprepared in comparison to their peers who stayed abroad longer. The students who were studying for over six months abroad felt that they were the best prepared.

Analysing the **memo** factors in the pre-stay survey by duration of the stay abroad reveals that students from the *Sample University* whose stay abroad was shorter than three months performed higher than their fellow students who planned to stay abroad for longer periods of times. They scored statistically significantly higher on the factors *Confidence*, *Tolerance of Ambiguity*, *Self-Efficacy*, *Serenity*, *Disputability* and *Resilience*, as well as on the **memo total**. Their **memo total** was 7.1, compared to scores of 6.7 for the other students.

SU students who went abroad for less than 3 months had the best pre-departure **memo** values. After their time abroad they increased their scores on 8 of the 10 **memo** factors.

Students who spent less than three months abroad increased their values on all of the **memo** factors, except *Resilience* and *Confidence*. In *Curiosity* there was a statistically significant improvement. The **memo total** score increased by 0.22, which is higher than the change in score for the closest institutions (0.22) but less than the **memo** average (0.57). Regarding the changes between the pre- and post-stay surveys, the short stay abroad generally increased their performance on the factors.

Both the students who stayed abroad between three and six months and those who stayed for more than six months increased their **memo totals** by 0.11. Those who were abroad for the intermediate term increased on nine of the ten factors, but only scored higher than the closest peer institutions on half of the factors. They experienced statistically significant improvements on *Tolerance of Ambiguity*, *Curiosity* and *Decisiveness*. Their peers who stayed abroad for over six months also improved on nine factors, but only received higher scores than similar institutions on *Tolerance of Ambiguity* and *Disputability*. They witnessed statistically significant improvements on *Decisiveness*, *Self-Efficacy*, *Curiosity* and the **memo total**.

Students that stayed abroad for longer than 3 months increased their **memo total** value and scored higher on 9 of the 10 **memo** factors in the post-stay survey.

Students who studied abroad for a shorter period of three months or less performed 100% better on the post-stay survey than the students who went abroad for three to six months or six months or more.

Type of Exchange Programme

The analysis of pre-stay values by type of exchange programme shows some clear differences. Students from the *Sample University* who went abroad as free movers have statistically significantly better values on nine of the **memo** factors (except *Sociality*) and the **memo total** than students who participated in the ERASMUS programme, other programmes, or bilateral university partnership programmes. They also have a better **memo** total when compared to the closest peer institutions, but not the **memo** average.

SU students who went abroad as free movers have the highest values on the **memo** factors in the pre-stay survey.

In the post-stay survey, students who went abroad with the ERASMUS programme ended up improving on their pre-stay **memo total** value by 0.13, the same as similar institutions and more than the **memo** average of 0.08. Students with the ERASMUS programme improved slightly on nine of the ten scores. They saw a significant improvement on the factors *Curiosity*, *Decisiveness*, *Tolerance of Ambiguity* and the **memo total**.

A stay abroad was most beneficial for students who went abroad with the ERASMUS programme.

Students who studied abroad with other mobility programmes improved their scores on eight factors after returning from their stay abroad. They witnessed a statistically significant improvement on *Curiosity*. Their **memo total** improved by 0.08, much less than the score of the closest peer institutions and **memo** average of 0.30.

Those who studied with university partnership programmes saw an increase of 0.09 on their **memo total** score, less than the **memo** average of 0.15. There was a statistically significant increase on one factor, *Curiosity*. This group increased its scores on half of the **memo** factors, including *Confidence*, *Tolerance of Ambiguity*, *Self-Efficacy*, *Decisiveness* and *Disputability*.

Finally, the students who studied abroad as free movers did not see any significant increases in the post-stay survey. They increased slightly on four factors and the **memo** average.

The ERASMUS students saw the most substantial improvements in their **memo total values, scoring 62.5% higher than students who went abroad with other mobility programmes and 44.4% higher than those who studied through university partnership programmes.** Comparisons to students who went abroad as free-movers are currently unavailable.

Voluntary Work

Students involved in voluntary work scored significantly higher on all ten **memo** factors and the **memo total** in the pre-stay survey than both students from the *Sample University* who do not volunteer and students from the closest peer institutions. This indicates that these students may have a more intercultural orientation from the outset of their studies abroad. After their stay abroad, students from the *Sample University* who were involved in voluntary work saw an increase on all of the factors apart from *Serenity* and *Resilience*. The change in their **memo total** was 0.10, similar to the closest peers (0.09) and the **memo** average (0.15).

SU students who volunteer had much better pre-stay results than students who do not volunteer.

Those students without involvement in voluntary work scored lower values than the **memo average** prior to their stay abroad. Their **memo total** was 6.62, compared to the average of 6.71. After returning they showed an improvement in their overall **memo total** value of 0.12. They achieved a significant positive change on the factors *Curiosity*, *Tolerance of Ambiguity* and *Decisiveness*, as

SU students without voluntary work increased their **memo total** scores 20% more than students who are involved in voluntary work.

well as their *memo total*. The only factor that decreased was that of *Resilience* (-0.10). **In total, they increased their *memo* scores by 20% more than students who were involved in voluntary work.**

Relationship Status

An analysis of the *memo* factors by relationship status shows that students from the *Sample University* who are in a relationship scored higher on five factors prior to their stay abroad than students who are not in a relationship (on *Confidence*, *Self-Efficacy*, *Vigor*, *Curiosity* and *Disputability*). Both groups of students scored 6.72 on their *memo totals*, above the totals of similar institutions but below the scores of the *memo* average.

SU students who are in a relationship had more positive outcomes on the *memo* factors after their time abroad.

The students in a relationship reported a positive change in their *memo* scores in eight of the ten factors and on the *memo total* (0.12) after their stay abroad. There were statistically significant changes in *Curiosity*, *Sociality*, *Tolerance of Ambiguity*, *Decisiveness* and the *memo total*. Students who were not in a relationship during their stay abroad also increased their scores in eight of the categories, but their *memo total* change was slightly less than students who were in a relationship at 0.10. There were statistically significant increases in all of the same categories as the students in a relationship experienced. **Overall, students in a relationship saw a 20% higher rate of improvement on their post-stay scores than students not in a relationship.**

Previous International Experience

Previous international experience also has an influence on the results of our surveys. Amongst the outgoing class of the *Sample University*, students without previous international experience scored higher values on all factors (with significant differences on *Curiosity*, *Serenity*, *Confidence* and the *memo total*) in the pre-stay survey than their fellow students with international experience. Within the closest peers, the same pattern occurs. This is an indication that experience abroad has long-term effects on intercultural competences and study success.

During their stay abroad, students with previous international experience saw a decrease on two factors, *Confidence* and *Serenity*, but their overall *memo* score increased by 0.08. Statistically significant improvements can be revealed for this group on the factors *Curiosity*, *Tolerance of Ambiguity* and the *memo total*.

SU students without previous international experience scored 112.5% better than their peers post-stay survey

Students without previous international experience saw positive changes on eight of the *memo* values. Statistically significant improvements can be seen on *Self-Efficacy*, *Curiosity*, *Tolerance of Ambiguity* and the *memo total*. After their time abroad, their *memo total* increased by 0.17, much higher than the *memo* average change of 0.01. **They improved their scores 112.5% more than their peers with previous international experience.**