Going abroad for an international program is the best thing you can do to build global perspective and cross-cultural skills — not to mention have the time of your life!

While the process of going abroad might feel daunting, there’s no need to go through it alone! There are many different people who can motivate you, support you and help you rise to the challenge. There’s power in numbers and value in creating a team of people who keep you focused on achieving your goals.

Below you’ll find a list of eight types of people, listed in order of importance, who can be valuable resources on your personal and professional skill-building journey.

1. **You!**
   Yes, you! No matter how many cheerleaders and supporters you have in your corner, it all starts with you. You need to maintain a positive perspective and sense of motivation. Recognize that this is your chance (maybe your only chance!) to travel abroad and acquire skills that will last a lifetime. Empower yourself and make sure you’re your own best friend, personal assistant and manager before reaching out to others.

   **WHY?**
   Because only you can make it happen!

2. **Your professors**
   Don’t be afraid to approach professors who have international experience or specializations. Set up a meeting during office hours and arrive with a selection of questions relevant to you and your career interests. Pick their brains about where to go, how to get there and how to maximize the value of the experience. Ask if they have any international connections for you to tap into.

   **WHY?**
   Professors are a knowledgeable bunch. They can offer unexpected insights and have a big positive impact on your decisions.

3. **Your friends**
   Having one friend or a team of similarly motivated student buddies can make the process of selecting, researching and applying to an international program easier and much more fun! You might not go abroad with these friends (in fact, it’s almost always more valuable to do your go-abroad program solo), but it can be incredibly inspiring to connect with peers who share similar international goals and values. They can also be useful sounding boards as you prepare your application and think about the career aspects of your international journey.

   **WHY?**
   Because having good friends who are excited about exploring and understanding the world has huge value.
4 Study abroad advisors
This is a no-brainer! Study abroad advisors are dedicated to helping you select the perfect program and have an enriching experience abroad. Go to them with all your goals, questions and concerns. If you’re concerned about financing your adventure, your study abroad advisor will likely have some excellent suggestions. They are also a source of valuable cross-cultural training, which is a key element in your professional development. **If you only meet with one person on this list, make it your study abroad advisor!**

**WHY?**
Because study abroad advisors hold the keys to your international experience. They can open more doors and provide better advice on available options than anyone else in this list. Plus, they are cross-cultural trainers. Make use of this resource.

5 Career advisors
Career advisors are dedicated to supporting you as you build career readiness and key competencies. They will help you identify international skills to boost your future career and can also assist you in marketing them to employers. Connect with career advisors before you go abroad. Keep them looped into your plans and always consider your international activities in the context of long-term career goals.

**WHY?**
Going abroad is personally enriching, but it also leads to positive career outcomes via skill-building and networking. Career advisors can help you identify, maximize and integrate these elements.

6 International students
If you already have international student friendships — congrats! You’re clearly attracted to making cross-cultural connections, which is one of the key traits of every successful traveler and global worker! Ask the international student office if there are any students from your destination country studying on campus, since they can be a great source of information and advice.

**WHY?**
Picking the brains of students from your host country can help you hit the ground running abroad. Plus, every cross-cultural friendship provides enriching insight into our globalized world.

7 Mentors & family friends
Don’t forget to tap into your family’s personal networks as you consider your options and prepare to go abroad. Do any of your family friends have international experience? Have they worked abroad? Are they abroad now? Take a proactive approach and network with one or more adults to get the best advice possible.

**WHY?**
You’d be surprised how many of your connections have international experience, advice and useful contacts to share. Unique perspectives are valuable when planning your go-abroad experience and these types of people can unlock opportunities and avenues you never expected.
**Family**

This is listed as the last option for a reason. Your family has your best interest at heart, but many parents feel cautious about the seemingly risky business of unnecessary international travel (hint: it's almost never as risky as they might fear!) It’s important to communicate with your family, but don’t let worry stand in the way of your adventure.

**WHY?**

This will vary according to your unique circumstances. Some students have tight bonds with their parents, while others are more independent. Some parents are hesitant to support international adventures, while others are eager for their kids to see the world. Work according to your circumstances but set your sights firmly on going abroad.

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**Choose Your Cheerleaders**

Create a network of supportive and insightful people to support your international journey.

Having champions in your corner will boost your motivation, confidence and commitment. Not everyone will be supportive, so ignore the nay-sayers and surround yourself with positivity. You can overcome any challenge and make it happen! We’ve seen students of all backgrounds succeed abroad.
13 Questions to Ask Go-abroad Supporters

Some of the questions below will be appropriate only for certain members of your support team.

1. Why should I go abroad?

2. Where and when should I go? I am interested in the ____ region, but open to suggestions.

3. Have you been abroad? What do you think you gained by going?

4. What are the most fun, rewarding and challenging elements of going abroad?

5. Should I go abroad for a two-week program or a full semester?

6. How can I fit study abroad into my academic timetable? What are the options?

7. Could I do an internship, volunteer term or study abroad program virtually? Is it worth it?

8. How can I afford this experience? Are there any scholarships or travel grants? Is it smart to balance one or more jobs with school?

9. Are there risks associated with going abroad?

10. Will I make friends and have access to support while abroad?

11. How should I best prepare for going abroad and culture shock?

12. Will going abroad help me in my career? How and what can I do to boost this element?

13. Is there anything else you think I should know?
A Last Word

MyWorldAbroad and your university are here to support you! So, go for it. Shape your life and career by going abroad to study, research, intern, volunteer, teach English or travel. Have fun while developing the skills that young professionals (like you!) need to succeed in the 21st century.