

SIOP Education and Training Study Abroad Subcommittee Recommendations

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Internationalizing I-O graduate curricula (the issue):

Globalization is undeniably affecting Industrial and Organizational Psychology. North American research is being adapted for application in other cultures. International organizations are evaluating how and where they can apply I-O Psychology. These organizations want to improve their responsiveness to local norms and regulation while reinforcing organization-wide cultural consistency. Research outside North America is increasingly important in the U.S. Cross-cultural research has become a huge area of study within I-O. Westernized and non-westernized organizations ready themselves to partner with one another in order to be competitive globally. Immigration and demographics have become central economic issues encouraging tolerance and cultural diversity in domestic, as well as international, organizations.

Industrial and Organizational graduate programs need to adopt global issues, research, and practices in all our courses. Our curricula need to embrace the new realities of the global workplace. We need to recognize the enhanced employability of graduates with international experience, and provide international opportunities for our students to exploit.

Internationalization of curricula needs to go beyond including an international module in courses, or presenting multi-cultural perspectives along side the prevailing domestic models and research. Internationalizing Graduate Industrial and Organizational Psychology Education in United States should include three major areas of opportunity development:

1. Individual student and faculty study-abroad opportunities

- Individual U.S. students or faculty attending universities in destinations of interest for a semester, a year, or entire graduate program – this type of cultural immersion would add substantively to an individual's employability in that area of the world. It indicates a level of commitment to a specific part of the world and develops both language and cultural skills needed to succeed in that region. These experiences are best when they include applied project work with collaborators from the destination country.
- Students and faculty from outside the U.S. attending/teaching at U.S. universities - this type exchange offers the opportunity to broaden perspectives and sensitize students and faculty of an entire program to another country or region of the world. This might also establish long-term contacts and encourage international research collaborations, exchanges, etc.

2. International research partnerships

- Forming international teams for the purpose of collaborative cross-cultural research could work to unite the science, increase generalizability of research, and establish bases for identifying and quantifying bona fide differences between cultures.

3. Group study abroad opportunities (courses)

- Provides groups of U.S. students an opportunity to express and explore their interest in cross-cultural issues and perspectives in the I-O field and

experience cultural differences. While these experiences do not offer an immediate advantage to students' employability, they introduce students to different cultures, business norms, and perspectives on problem-solving. These experiences should be encouraged, as they develop cultural curiosity, openness, and tolerance.

The study abroad subcommittee's original charge:

The E&T subcommittee for Study Abroad Opportunities has been charged to identify, investigate, and develop specific recommendations concerning options for group study abroad opportunities by U.S. based graduate programs. The subcommittee will consider issues including program logistics, faculty needs, course quality, and student needs. Options may include partnering with established organizations/consortia who provide logistical expertise and services, international professional organizations, and individual universities located in strategic industrialized areas of the world. The subcommittee will develop a full and specific proposal concerning recommended SIOP involvement in developing, coordinating and overseeing graduate level study abroad opportunities. The final report will also include needs analysis (measure of student demand), available resources (potential partners), and recommended faculty recruitment, screening and selection guidelines.

The study abroad subcommittee's final recommendations:

The subcommittee developed the following full and specific proposal concerning recommended SIOP involvement in developing and promoting graduate level study abroad opportunities. This report includes identifying available resources (potential partners), and recommended faculty guidelines. It does not include an analysis of student

demand, as we expect that demand to increase over the next few years, and believe a static analysis of student demand today will be out dated once completed. Our recommendation is to test market group study abroad opportunities and assess demand as well as the need for procedural changes on an on-going basis.

Currently, undergraduate group study abroad opportunities are numerous and available, while graduate level opportunities are rare. Mixing graduates and undergraduates may not be desirable. The content and level of work possible in a “cross-listed” course may be diluted if the student mix is extremely heterogynous (neophyte to graduate level). Additionally, site visits and guest speakers specializing in I-O topics are much more interested in meeting higher level undergraduates and graduate students, especially in countries that see a great deal of study abroad traffic, the more developed countries.

Identifying enough graduate students to make a study abroad course economically feasible within any single program is very rare. We all probably have students interested in international opportunities, but no single program has enough student demand to “make” a class. A method of collecting student demand, over numerous programs, for international travel and education opportunities is needed in order to provide a focused, valuable, and relevant experience for our graduate I-O students.

One of the major obstacles currently limiting group study abroad opportunities for U.S. students is that study abroad programs and consortia exist locally and regionally. Faculty members proposing opportunities (courses) face a big challenge in generating enough student interest to make the class. Usually twelve or more students are needed in order to be financially feasible. More specialized courses have trouble due to a more

limited pool of students from which to draw. In order to generate the necessary student interest faculty have included undergraduates with various levels of exposure to I-O. The ability to recruit from more graduate programs is a central concern in making graduate level study abroad opportunities available.

The subcommittee recommends launching a national program to help develop and promote I-O group study abroad opportunities exclusively for graduate students through SIOP. The following recommendations are intended to maximize course quality without asking SIOP to evaluate, monitor or take responsibility for financial, operational, or logistic aspects of these courses.

In developing these recommendations the subcommittee considered the issues of course quality and relevance along with SIOP's desire to perform as a clearinghouse resource for faculty providing study abroad opportunities. Based on the context of group study abroad opportunities as one of the three major areas of internationalizing curricula, and the introductory nature of group study abroad opportunities, we recommend the following roles for SIOP:

1. Providing a resource for faculty in developing study abroad courses by providing referred contacts of interest in destination countries. SIOP will provide U.S. faculty introductions to resources and people valuable to ensuring the quality of students' study abroad experiences. These should include but not be limited to SIOP members, government and non-government organizations relevant to I-O practice, and businesses which may be available for site visits.
2. Promoting developed study abroad courses to U.S. graduate students nationally. SIOP will post study abroad opportunities on the SIOP web site and in TIP. These

postings will include information essential for students to make informed judgments about study abroad opportunities of interest, and provide students contact information needed to pursue these opportunities.

3. Providing a resource to students and faculty in identifying sources of funding for study abroad. SIOP will post and maintain a listing of study abroad funding sources, criteria, and contact information on the SIOP web site.

All responsibilities for evaluating and approving courses will be handled by the credit granting institutions. Students will be responsible for arranging credit transfer to their institution and program, as well as pursuing any available funding sources.

The information SIOP will require before assisting faculty in contacting resources in various destination countries, and posting study abroad opportunities to the web site and TIP include:

Course title:

Course description:

Prerequisites:

Credit hours (number and level):

Credit granting institution:

Instructor:

Contact information:

Organization providing travel, lodging, and related services:

Description of what services are included:

Contact information:

Estimated cost (what that cost does and does not include)

Dates and location of U.S. departure and return:

Daily planned itinerary: