



## **University of Evansville to Harlaxton College**

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Harlaxton College

Grantham, England

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### **Summary of Experience:**

I want to become a more globalized citizen. This is the idea that I had in my head before the start of my study abroad program. I became eager to fly out as the day approached. Having never been away from home for so long, I knew I would miss my friends and family but felt confident they would enjoy the stories I would inevitably tell as much as I enjoyed living them. Upon arriving in England, my first few days went as planned. I began to make new friends both from my country and overseas. I fell into the culture and embraced any new experience I could get my touristy hands on. Interestingly, as the weeks went on, I began to realize there was so much more to this umbrella term, “globalized”, than I could ever imagine.

While studying a fascinating course over death and dying through the weekdays, each of my few weekends were filled with traveling and new experiences. I began in London as I visited countless museums, monuments, and royal buildings, skateboarded in the underground, and went on a scavenger hunt around the city for works by Banksy, a world-renowned English graffiti artist and political activist. Soon, I found myself in York where I stayed in an amazing hostel, went on a ghost tour of the town, and took a short bus ride through the English hills to Whitby, home of Stoker's inspiration for *Dracula*. Here, I had some famous fish and chips, explored the wharf, and hiked up the infamous 199 steps to Whitby Abbey where I perused the haunting graveyard and church. Next weekend, I made it across the channel in a 10-hour bus ride to Paris where the smell of €1 baguettes filled my nose and escargot and fine cheeses filled my mouth. Additionally, I explored three castles in the Loire Valley, tasting wines along the way, walked the catacombs, and had a couple picnics in front of the Eiffel Tower. Amsterdam was filled with some of the most picturesque landscapes, as I biked to a remote coast and even stayed on a local sheep farm. Berlin, of course, had the wall, but also an abandoned and graffitied radio tower at the top of a manmade hill from WWII accessible by a hike through an aromatic pine forest. On the island of Santorini, I swam in the ocean, finding flounder and octopus tucked under quaint rock formations, found a secret trail to the cliffs where I sat and watched the ocean alone, and ate at the same restaurant every night, becoming great friends with the owner and eating delicious gyros and moussaka. While all these experiences are irreplaceable, rewarding, and will last a lifetime, they are not necessarily the aspect that I believe will leave the most permanent mark on me.

**Impact:**

These experiences aren't necessarily unique, as travelers come back with stories we all envy. However, what is often forgotten and as equally important in becoming a globalized citizen is the adaptation, and often struggle, of one to dramatically changing situations while

overseas. I find this to be the more permanent, life-changing quality of being abroad. Part of this globalization is staying cool when trains made through world-class “German engineering” break down on the tracks and force you to evacuate, when the door to your Air B&B won’t open and you use a popsicle stick on the ground out of lack of resources to pry the lock open, or when Greek sailors go on strike the one and only day you need them not to. My study abroad program, and process of becoming a globalized citizen in general, taught me adaptation and efficiency. It taught me to live in the moment, while being alert and mindful of the situation. It taught me to embrace the differences in culture, but also be wary and use common judgement when things seem out of the ordinary. It may seem cynical, but we do the same things at home to keep safe. Complications are unavoidable (and often not a fault of our own) when traveling and our response to them is indicative of who we are as an individual. We must also remember that while we are traveling, we are wearing the face of our own country. We are not only embracing cultures of new worlds but showing these worlds how we live ourselves. It is our responsibility to be respectful and competent while traveling, all while having a great time. These lessons are the somewhat less-tangible fruits that photos, journals, and stories often leave out. Behind every meaningful experience there is the process to achieving that experience. This is what my study abroad experience taught me, and I consider this an invaluable reward.

### **Program Strengths:**

Harlaxton College served as a great home-base between our traveling excursions. The “few days of class, few days of travel” week schedule offered a great balance as seven full weeks of straight up travel would drive most up the wall. The staff at Harlaxton were incredibly inviting and offered help whenever we needed it. The comradery of being divided into your own house (similar to Hogwarts) at Harlaxton serves to create stronger friendships and friendly competition. I quickly established a large, but close, new friend-group and spent my weekends traveling with them. Put simply, at Harlaxton, you are never alone.

### **Program Weaknesses:**

My only complaint about the summer program at Harlaxton is the amount of mandatory and house (which you feel obliged to attend) events. Very seldom did one find a moment where there wasn't something to do. This program was fast-paced and could be a bit overwhelming to some. However, it was also during this time that I was submitting my primary medical school application which may have made my time at Harlaxton a bit less relaxing. Overall, the program has few weaknesses that should shy anyone away from attending.

### **Learning Achievements:**

As for how this experience will affect my education and career, I believe it has opened infinite opportunities for new journeys across the world. I feel confident, after having never traveled overseas alone, in bringing my family along to make memorable trips. My parents have seldom traveled, and I feel this is mostly because they do not know how to use the technology we have today to get around easily. Because I feel comfortable moving myself around, I feel I can manage them as well (as long as they can keep up!), making for some family bonding experiences that would have otherwise never happened. Additionally, as an individual who craves a holistic education not just through the world of academia, I see myself picking up new trades, practices, and cuisines while I travel the world. My excursions in Europe added a few new dishes like moussaka and gyros to my kitchen, inspired me to write a song from the port of Piraeus, and instilled an appreciation for street art that I can bring back to the states. My trips across Europe reinforced my desire to learn more about photography, as I did my best to capture some of the most breathtaking sights I've seen to date. The images below convey only a fraction of the beauty of these places. Finally, I see myself implementing the newfound understanding of other cultures in the practice of medicine. Throughout medical school and working in hospitals in general, I am bound to come across patients from all over the world. Due to this travel experience, it is much easier to put into perspective the views of others from different countries

rather than regarding them as “strange” or misunderstanding them altogether. Undeniably, traveling makes you a more competent, efficient, and appreciative person, qualities needed by today’s physicians.



The view of Harlaxton manor in Grantham, England





A shot down the road from Harlaxton



"God's Own Junkyard" – A restaurant and bar on the outskirts of London, home to thousands of neon sign designs





"The Vaults" – A venue found in a defunct tunnel lined with hundreds of pieces of street art





A bridge covering a canal in Amsterdam





A boat moving  
down the canal in  
Amsterdam



A boat coming into port in Amsterdam





A street art piece found near a canal in Berlin



The view from the ferry, a few miles before the coast of Santorini