



A joint project of the **University of Bern, Switzerland** and the **University of Technology Sydney, Australia**

MILSA

A mentoring program that supports outbound students in their intercultural learning before, during and after their study abroad

Why the need to mentor Study Abroad students?

It is often assumed that students who go abroad will return with new skills in intercultural communication and a worldly open-mindedness. However, some return from their stay abroad with negative learning outcomes and reinforced prejudices.

This undesirable effect of study abroad can be counteracted by preparing and accompanying students during their time abroad with a mentoring system that supports them not only in their **critical social and cultural negotiation** with the host country but also in **reflecting upon their own behaviour in the intercultural connections**.

Program aims:

- Help students to facilitate their intercultural learning
- Help students to voice expectations about their study abroad
- Encourage students to reflect on their personal role and experiences
- Support students in their social and cultural negotiation with the host country
- Help students to practice talking about the study abroad experience in view of their future professional life

Key modules of the mentoring:

- Information session (1 hour)
- Pre-departure workshop (3 hours)
- Blog contributions on intercultural learning experience
- Skype interview with mentor (45 minutes)
- Post-sojourn workshop (3 hours)
- Online evaluation (30 minutes)
- Certificate of Completion issued by the University
- Held in English
- Duration: 12 months

Writing the blog contributions forced me to reflect about my intercultural learning actively and not just live my daily life.

I really enjoyed reading the other blog contributions because they made me see that some of my peers faced similar problems.

MILSA helped me to think about what I was expecting for my study abroad.

MILSA helped me to be more aware of my role as a 'stranger' in a country which I've never been to before and think about how I might adapt to a new way of living.

I like the variety of the program – workshops, interview, blogs.



www.milsa.unibe.ch

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