

The Benefits Of Studying Abroad

Russel Howe, a Scot who is currently studying a Business degree at Stellinga International College in the Netherlands, previously also studied in India (which came 11th on the list). 'People often ask me why I needed to travel, because British universities have a good reputation elsewhere in the world. But this is not something I needed to do, but something I really wanted to do. I have learnt different ways of looking at things, but I also found out how much we all have in common, wherever we are from. All of this will be useful in my future career.'

Russel is not the only international student in his department. Business and administrative courses are the most popular with international students, followed by engineering and technology, social studies, creative arts and design, medicine-related topics and law. Manal, a student at the Faculty of Art and Design at Stellinga, says she has similar reasons to Russel, but there is more: 'I wanted to broaden my understanding of the world. I have enhanced my language skills: I am more fluent in English than before and have also taken a Dutch evening class. One of my modules is about European art, and I believe that I am benefiting more from studying this in Europe than anywhere else. I have managed to visit other countries in my holidays, and really feel that this whole experience is developing my global perspective. I also hope that I have made lasting friendships and contacts.'

Enabling student access

What is it that makes these countries successful in attracting international students? Well, all of them make it easy for international students to apply, and provide ongoing support once they are there. They also offer good quality degrees, which are valued highly in other countries too. Apart from these reasons, Germany also makes an effort towards internationalization, making it come out as a winner. One aspect of this is that the country welcomes foreign students by charging them the same fees as home students, meaning that in some universities overseas students study for free. Many classes are conducted in English, and so are most leaflets, making it easier for international students to keep informed and take part in student life.

Apart from the financial reasons already mentioned, this type of educational internationalization can help with the quality of research in these universities, through e.g. networking, team work and the sharing of skills. For students, it is a valuable addition to their skills and experience at a time when jobs are not easy to find.