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With the constant fear of COVID-19, and barely having left the constraints of my home, my appreciation for the true value of time has grown. When our lives were held still it was inevitable that the second I was presented the opportunity to study abroad, I immediately took it. But as amazing as this sounded and as excited as I am, the process of preparing to travel has been no walk in the park.

The place for you

When it comes to deciding where to study, there's an extensive list of destinations offered to you, and picking the right one may not be an overnight decision. With various factors to consider, whether it's the financials, culture, or just finding where you'd fit in, research is crucial! Narrow down your options considering the factors most important to you.

- If ranking matters, use sites such as [topuniversities.com](https://www.topuniversities.com) or [timeshighereducation.com](https://www.timeshighereducation.com) to compare your choices
- To understand the culture at the university and city, search for 'Days in the life' of their students or vlogs on YouTube
- If funding your time abroad is worrying you, research the support available. If your exchange program is part of the ERASMUS+ scheme, you may be eligible for their grants, or find potential scholarships, such as the BUTEX awards

Most importantly, don't hesitate to get in touch with your advisors. They'll help you choose the ideal place for you.

Overcoming a Language Barrier

I can't help but feel daunted by the thought of paying for my groceries, with a queue of infuriated locals behind me whilst I desperately try to communicate with the cashier in a language I barely speak. Overcoming a language barrier may mean learning from scratch and building from the basics. That's where Duolingo helps me. However, this level of fluency isn't enough for me, so I enrolled in a 2-week intensive language course. Check out your host university's website for language courses, as knowing the language will not only be an impressive skill but also allows you to make the most of your time abroad.

Drowning in paperwork!!

Now onto the boring stuff.

Here's a little story. Imagine waking up at 6 am, after 4 hours of sleep, for a 3-hour journey to Central London in the pouring rain to submit your visa application, only to be told that your documentation is insufficient.

Yep...

That was me, and I don't think I have to stress how annoyed I was.

When you plan to travel abroad, you will have A LOT of paperwork: learning agreements, risk assessments, module selections, the list could go on, but unfortunately, I have a word limit. Keep

checklists of all the documents you have completed or are yet to complete, and ensure you get them reviewed. Keep track of the deadlines in your calendar and turn the reminders on. You'll thank me later!

Studying abroad is a pivotal chance to enhance your skills, versatility, and develop a truly global mindset. Above all, immerse yourself in the experience and have fun!