**YEAR 3 Employability Resource 1**

**Making the most of the experience while abroad**

Look back to your action plan for recording your year abroad employability experiences (Year 1 Task 2) and to your objectives for the year abroad (Year 2 Task 2).

How have you planned to record your YA experiences?

How are you going to ensure that you do this at a time when other activities will take greater priority?

Review the section on the [www.realie.org](http://www.realie.org) website relating to how to get the best out of the REALIE resource.

**ACTIVITY**

Set up your file, blog, facebook page, portfolio etc. for recording your YA experiences as early as possible.

Here are some questions to help you reflect on and record your experiences at three key points during your year abroad.

**Beginning (before Christmas period)**

* Thinking back to the questions answered before you went away, how does the experience so far compare to your expectations? (i.e. What characteristics of the host country’s people and way of life do you think you will most/least appreciate?)
* What has been your highlight so far?
* What was the low point?
* Are you keeping your portfolio updated? (Record of your achievements, examples of when you displayed a certain skill?)
* Are you writing a blog? Does it help you reflect on what you are doing?
* Reflecting on the 10 skills you reflected on before your placement, are you developing the ones you wanted to improve?
* Do you think your language is improving? Are there any areas which you need to concentrate on?
* Are you enjoying you placement? Do you feel compelled to do well and succeed? (drive)
* Have you encountered any problems/difficulties? How did you overcome this? What did you learn from this experience?
* (WP) Are you gaining an insight into the industry you’re working in? *(commercial awareness)*
* How well are you juggling work/study/social commitments? (Time management; planning & organising)
* How well are you adapting to the local culture, customs & practises?
* How are you adjusting to the pace of life in the country?
* What are you doing to improve the following language skills?

Reading:

Writing:

Listening:

Speaking:

**Middle (after Christmas period)**

* Are you starting to think about post-graduate prospects (graduate placements, post-grad study?
* Do you think this placement will help you in your future career?
* Have you considered summer internships or placements for this coming summer?
* Are you keeping your portfolio updated? (Record of your achievements, examples of when you displayed a certain skill?)
* Are you writing a blog? Does it help you reflect on what you are doing?
* What skill do you think you are improving the most?
* Have you encountered any problems/difficulties? How did you overcome this? What did you learn from this experience?
* (WP) What have you learnt about the industry you’re working in?

**End (Just before or after your return from your YA)**

* What did you enjoy/appreciate the most about your placement?
* What skill do you feel you developed the most?
* What area of language do you feel you developed the most?
* (BC) Based on your experience as an assistant, are now considering a career in teaching? Why (not)?
* (WP) Has your placement given your future career more direction? Has it influenced your future plans?
* Reflect on the way you thought about developing the 10 skills (before you went away), have you achieved this? Done more/less than you expected?
* Would you recommend your placement to other students? Why (not)?
* Have you updated your CV?
* Has being abroad given you any more motivation to explore new cultures? Learn new languages? (drive)
* What surprised you most about your host country and why?
* What advice or tips would you give to students going abroad to make the most out of their year abroad?
* How will your experiences of the year abroad affect your future choices?
* How important do you think this experience will prove to be in your life?