



**Resident Directors in Europe:
Our Community, Our Contributions, and Our Challenges**

A Research Project of the European Association of Study Abroad (EUASA)

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Introduction

Resident Directors (RD) play key roles in the on-site development and success of US study abroad in Europe. At the Forum on Education Abroad Conference in Prague in October 2018, the Critical Dialogue session was an open-ended discussion among study abroad Resident Directors in Europe about how undefined, challenging, poorly understood, and variable their role can be. It was affirming and gratifying for participants in the Critical Dialogue to share their experiences with RD colleagues who clearly and genuinely understood the complexities of their job. The consensus was that the only people who truly understand the job of a Resident Director, are other Resident Directors.

A common experience that emerged during the Critical Dialogue was that RDs feel invisible and rarely acknowledged for their unique skills set, given that they work remotely for predominantly US-based institutions. Although, out of necessity, RDs listen and pay close attention to the home institutions with which they work, they have only recently begun to talk with and listen to other RDs, be they in the same country or within the same continent. Resident Directors, a geographically scattered collection of international education professionals and academics, are now searching for a collective voice, one that will hopefully be better heard than their individual, often ignored, voices.

An outcome of the Critical Dialogue session, which revealed the overwhelming sense that the important voice of study abroad on-the-ground leaders is not often heard, was to conduct a survey-based study of the RD in Europe in all its complexities. Items and topics such as external perceptions, levels of responsibility, career prospects, challenges, rewards and concerns, were all examined. Every attempt was made to take the diversity within the RD community into consideration in order to interpret the resulting data as best as possible. This report presents the results of that study.

This report is intended for three main audiences. One is the Resident Director community itself, who can gain a better understanding of the current role, employment conditions and job satisfaction of their fellow RDs. This information also sheds light on the RDs' position within the sector as a whole, their benefits and challenges alike. These leaders are a dedicated, active and enthusiastic group of experts in the field; yet, they often feel removed from the decision-making process and points of influence in the sector.

The second audience includes those individuals who supervise study abroad operations and the on-site directors, often from afar. This study shows that there are serious issues with representation, communication, respect, and remuneration. Attention needs to be paid to these results. While many agree that there are advantages to the RD position including living in Europe, a high level of autonomy, and the opportunity to have a formative influence on the lives of young students, there are also large challenges to be addressed, according to this study.

The third audience is the higher education community as a whole, including those who do not often interact directly with Resident Directors (Provosts, Presidents, and Boards of Trustees included). This study reveals that RDs possess a wealth of expertise and talent and demonstrate great commitment and dedication to ensure that important programs

operate successfully on the ground in Europe. This reality needs to be recognized, appreciated, trusted, and celebrated far more than it currently is. Study abroad programs are only as good as the execution on site; but, many Resident Directors feel that their counterparts in the US, and the international higher education sector in general, have forgotten this over the years.

The Survey

In the summer of 2019, the European Association of Study Abroad (EUASA), in partnership with country organizations from the UK (AASAP/UK), Ireland (ASAPI), Spain (APUNE), France (APUAF), Italy (AACUPI), Germany (AASAPeV), and the Czech Republic (AAUP CZ), took the initiative to conduct the proposed study. A research team representing each of the member countries was formed and proceeded to design and distribute the survey to European Resident Directors of study abroad programs titled ***Resident Directors in Europe: Our Community, Our Contributions, and Our Challenges***.

The extensive survey was completed (to at least 75% of asked questions) between July and September, 2019 by 218 Resident Directors representing 10 countries (Table 1.1). It is estimated that this represents approximately 40% of the Resident Directors working in Europe. In order to protect the confidentiality of individual respondents, country-specific data for selected questions is only presented if there were 10 or more respondents from that country for that specific question. Respondents from Germany, Switzerland, Greece, and the Netherlands, having fewer than 10 respondents per country for most questions, are grouped into the Other category.

The survey results are divided into a series of sections as noted below, the results of which are presented in this report.

Introduction and Key Results (this document)

Section 1 - About Resident Directors (Demographics)

Section 2 - About the Job and Programs Being Run by Resident Directors

Section 3 - Job Preparation and Training

Section 4 - Job Responsibilities and Expected Expertise of the Resident Director

Section 5 - Job Satisfaction

Section 6 - The Biggest Benefit of Being a Resident Director

Section 7 - The Biggest Challenge of Being a Resident Director

Section 8 - Further Open Comments

Key Results

In a survey with 218 respondents representing 10 European countries (Table 1.1), this study finds the following key results about European Study Abroad Resident Directors (RD);

- Over 60% are female (Table 1.2),
- Identify primarily as Caucasian/White, American, or European (Table 1.4)
- Are an average age of 48.8 years (Figure 1.1), with 47.1 years for females and 51.5 years for males (Figure 1.2),
- 73.0% are citizens of the country in which they work,
- 41.0% hold United States citizenship (Table 1.6),

- 41.7% have no historical, educational, or residence links with the United States other than their job (Figure 1.4),
- On average have been a study abroad professional for 15.1 years (Figure 1.6), and have been a Resident Director for 10.3 years (Figure 1.7),
- 44.5% hold Doctorate degrees and 44.5% hold Masters degrees as the highest level of education attained (Table 1.9), and 60.5% of those holding Doctorate degrees are male (Table 1.11),
- The most common field of RD education is language studies (Table 1.12),
- 85.6% have the word 'Director' in their job title, with the most commonly used title being 'Resident Director' (Table 2.1),
- 82.7% hold the job as a full-time role, and 32.5% teach in addition to director responsibilities (Table 2.2),
- 79.5% hold a permanent contract (Table 2.3), and 93.1% are employed for 12 months of the year (Table 2.6),
- Overall 40.5% hold an academic rank (Table 2.7), including 52.9% of male Resident Directors (Table 2.8),
- 59.2% of survey respondents were directors of a US university program in Europe (Table 2.9),
- Earn an average salary of €66,495, with lowest salaries reported in the Czech Republic and Ireland, and the highest in the United Kingdom and Italy (Table 2.10),
- Have an average salary of €60,625 for females and €75,077 for males (Table 2.11), €80,325 for those holding Doctorates (Table 2.12), and significantly higher salaries for those holding an academic rank (Table 2.13),
- A highest average salary of €73,302 for those working for US universities, and a lowest average salary of €36,667 for those working for Third Party Providers specializing in Internships (Table 2.15),
- The only employment benefits received by more than 50% of respondents are health and medical insurance (73.1%), and phone cost or contribution (65.9%)(Table 2.16),
- On average supervise 3.9 staff members and 10.5 faculty members (Table 2.18),
- Work an average of 46.8 hours per week (Table 2.19),
- Median are responsible for between 51-70 students on the ground at any one time (Table 2.20), with semester-length stays being the most common (Table 2.21), and have students on site for an average of 38.8 weeks per year (Table 2.23),
- Are most commonly utilizing academic space under the control of the program (66.0%)(Table 2.24), and a wide variety of types of student residence facilities (Table 2.25),
- >50% Strongly Agree they are adequately prepared to deal with:
 - Academic Mentoring,
 - Emergency Response,
 - Managing Physical Space for the Program,
 - Budget and Accounting,
 - Non-Critical Mental Health, amongst others (Figure 3.1)
- <35% Strongly Agree they are adequately prepared to deal with:
 - Critical Mental Health,
 - Local Corporation Law and Regulation,
 - First Aid,

- GDPR,
 - Local HR and Employment Law, amongst others (Figure 3.3)
- In terms of Financial and Legal Responsibilities, the most amount of time is spent on;
 - budget planning and preparation,
 - expense reporting,
 - risk assessment,
 - local immigration law and policies,
 - local bank account management (Figure 4.1),
- In terms of Program, Facilities, and HR responsibilities, the most amount of time is spent on;
 - employment supervision of local staff,
 - academic supervision of local faculty,
 - academic centre facilities management,
 - hiring decisions regarding local staff,
 - coordination of tour logistics (Figure 4.2),
- In terms of Student Services responsibilities, the most amount of time is spent on;
 - orientation leadership,
 - being a cultural facilitator and guide,
 - emergency on-call responder,
 - academic advising,
 - being a cultural interpreter (Figure 4.3),
- In terms of Program Development responsibilities, the most amount of time is spent on;
 - cultural program development,
 - developing and maintaining relationships with local partner universities,
 - being a local representative for the institution,
 - course development,
 - and being an institutional representative at conferences (Figure 4.4),
- Professional services support is most often received in the areas of;
 - local tax law and policies,
 - payroll preparation,
 - staff pension management,
 - local corporation law and policies,
 - corporate audit management (Table 4.1),
- < 40% Strongly Agreed;
 - they are able to take vacation while students are on the ground,
 - they have opportunities for career advancement within their current institution,
 - the institution allows for a proper work-life balance,
 - remuneration (pay and benefits) are fair and in line with responsibilities,
 - they have adequate staffing to provide all the services expected of the program, amongst other job satisfaction statements (Figure 5.1),
- > 55% Strongly Agreed;
 - their institution displays a dedication towards staff and student safety while abroad,
 - their institution displays a dedication to international education,

- their work gave them a sense of personal accomplishment,
 - the job makes good use of their skills and abilities,
 - and everything considered they are satisfied with their job, amongst other job satisfaction statements (Figure 5.3),
- The top 5 benefits to being a Resident Director in Europe are;
 - being a major part of transformational global student learning,
 - being a cultural bridge for students to a new country/culture,
 - contact with students,
 - autonomy, freedom, and independence,
 - living in Europe (Table 6.1),
- The top 5 challenges to being a Resident Director in Europe are;
 - the multiple responsibilities, work-life balance, and stress of a 24/7 role,
 - communication, support and disconnect challenges with home institution,
 - navigating US - Europe cultural differences,
 - managing home office expectations,
 - managing student expectations (Table 7.1),
- Individual additional comments in Section 8 highlight some specific viewpoints on the role of being a Resident Director in Europe.

Acknowledgements

Michelle Miller, formerly of Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont, aided greatly in survey methodology and software coding. The Forum on Education Abroad is thanked for hosting the Critical Dialogue event in Prague, Czech Republic, that led to the creation of this survey and study. The early work on Resident Directors as presented at the Forum on Education Abroad conference in 2016 by Christine Kelly-Vereda, Maritheresa Frain, Daniel Lumonya, and John Lucas served as a model for this study. The lead on this project, Stephen Robinson, wishes to thank Champlain College for allowing time to pursue this study, and EUASA and all of the country organizations for support, and apologizes profusely (as only fellow Canadians can) to several Canadian institutions who quite rightly felt this survey did not sufficiently recognize non-US study abroad institutions.

To our fellow Resident Directors, you are an amazing bunch, immersing students culturally, academically, and socially in a great part of the world. The responsibilities are great, but so are the rewards. The frustrations are real. We often feel that we don't have a voice in the sector, even though we make it happen on the ground for students. Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey. Let's hope this study goes some way to us gaining increased understanding, recognition, and support.

In addition to EUASA as a pan-European association, country associations representing the study abroad sector exist in many countries, including;

AAECG - Association of American Educational and Cultural Organizations in Greece

AACUPI - Association of American College and University Programs in Italy

AASAPeV - Association of American Study Abroad Programs in Germany

AAUP CZ - Association of American University Programs in the Czech Republic

APUAF - Association of American University Programs in France

ASAPI - Association of Study Abroad Providers in Ireland

AUCS - Association of American Universities and Colleges Switzerland

APUNE - Association of North American University Programs in Spain

AASAP/UK - Association of American Study Abroad Programmes United Kingdom