



## Section 6 - Biggest Benefit of Being a Resident Director in Europe

Survey respondents were asked an open-ended text response question ‘**What do you see as the biggest benefit of being a Resident Director in Europe**’. The responses (n=131) were coded into general categories and summarized in terms of number and frequency of mention (Table 6.1). Selected individual text responses are also presented below.

*Table 6.1. The biggest benefit of being a Resident Director in Europe. Original answers were in open-ended text format and have been categorized here for clarity with number of respondents and percent respondents who made a comment within that category. Text responses often included statements in more than one category.*

Categorized Responses	# Respondents	% Respondents
Being a major part of transformational global student learning	52	39.7
Cultural bridge for students to a new country/culture	45	34.4
Contact with students	22	16.8
Autonomy, freedom, and independence	21	16.0
Living in Europe	17	13.0
Exciting and rewarding role	11	8.4
Variety of the role	9	6.9
Non-traditional academic role	9	6.9
Being away from head campus politics / institutional issues	6	4.6
Great colleagues	6	4.6
Excellent remuneration and benefits	5	3.8

Sample Responses to the Open-Ended Question: ‘**What do you see as the biggest benefit of being a Resident Director in Europe**’. Several statements have been edited to remove identifying information.

- *Working with young people, seeing them grow, learning new things every day. Job diversity.*
- *Working with American students in a country and a language that I love. I feel like my students are so much more motivated to learn here than they would be in a*

*classroom on their home campus. I often think of myself as the bridge between home and host country and culture and this is extremely rewarding. I often feel that I have played a role in students becoming better global citizens.*

- *Socialist benefits including high quality health care, subsidized child care for working parents, and job security under [country name] labor law.*
- *Sense of accomplishment due to being an active part of students' personal and academic growth.*
- *It gives a sense of mission, that you are helping students to have an important life and educational experience. It's a fresh challenge with each new group.*
- *In my case freedom to operate away from main campus politics and power struggles.*
- *Being in Europe !*
- *Accompanying students in this life-transforming experience. The personal, cultural and academic changes that take place during their stay is amazing to witness. The role of educator and mentor is an overall rewarding experience. The relative independence of the career as RD is very appealing to me. That would have been my biggest challenge in a tenure-track position in the US. Living in [country name] has been a tremendously rewarding experience, both on a personal and professional level.*
- *Eternal youth.*
- *Watching US students grow academically and personally, educating future leaders and thus contributing to a better understanding between Europe and the US.*
- *As long as things are going well myself and my staff are left alone to put on the best program we can. The fact that I am not micromanaged is a huge reward. I get to show hundreds of students a country and culture that I love, and to help shape their worldview. Study abroad is truly a transformative time for most students, and myself and my staff are on the front lines for that. Very rewarding, complex, and stressful, but I wouldn't change it for anything.*
- *It is rewarding, under the right circumstances, to work with the students and see how they grow and become more confident and culturally aware over the course of a semester.*
- *Being surrounded by an international environment and having the hard but fascinating mission to educate young minds, which are our future.*
- *Being based outside of the US.*

- *Even though I was born and raised in the US, I am now working in the country where I studied abroad, and which had a huge impact on my life. One of the biggest benefits of living and working here (as opposed to working in international education from the US) is getting to see student growth in person. Many students view this as a chance to travel, admittedly, but even in a large group of students there are at least a handful who take this seriously and really try to connect with the local culture. Being a part of that is so fulfilling and rewarding and I wouldn't want it any other way.*
- *Giving students the opportunity to see and understand that the world is larger than they one they know in the USA. Watching them change and grow from the time they arrive to the time they depart in 3 months.*
- *Learning so much, and able to educate students as they begin their study abroad experience. It never gets old!*
- *The biggest benefit of any site director in any part of the world is the contact with young people.*
- *Being able to share in the students' life changing experience*
- *Love what I do so much since my job has a great impact not only on my students but also on the local economy*
- *I love the job itself, in spite of the isolation I often feel. My fellow Euro directors (my institution also has programs in other European countries) and I meet remotely on a regular basis, but it is not the institution that encouraged this. We took the initiative ourselves. Before I came on board, the European directors from my university did not even know each other or ever coincide on campus visits. The institution still feels uneasy about us meeting together, and they do not understand why it is so important to us. The biggest benefit for me, as an educator, is the magnificent opportunity we have to teach students at a vulnerable moment of their lives how to cultivate a mindful approach to cultural difference, and to their own experience of difficulty, how to care for themselves when they need care, how to deepen their interest in what exceeds their comprehension, how to develop respect and empathy for the host culture, all the while remaining critical to its injustices. It's a formidable task, but one that provides unique opportunities to teach for a better world. I love mentoring my students, supervising my staff and faculty, building a better and better program. I basically oversee a division of the university, and I very much enjoy the challenges and rewards that it brings. However, I feel like this is the best kept secret at my university! I think they see me as a babysitter (not my direct supervisor, but pretty much everyone else). It's frustrating. They don't treat me like a colleague.*
- *I love teaching, and being the Resident Director allows me a lot of scope for planning co-curricular activities - both for my own courses, and in conjunction with visiting US faculty - that use [city name] and the wider [country name] as teaching resources. The opportunity to share [country name] and European culture and history with*

*intelligent, inquisitive and responsive students, which most of mine are, is very gratifying. The same goes for the visiting faculty from the US institution, some of whom are in the [country name] for the first time and/or are teaching in London for the first time. The constant variety of the job is also very appealing.*

- *Being part of the education of rising generations of US students and, hopefully, expanding their knowledge and awareness of Europe.*
- *Being less involved in internal university politics and hierarchy.*
- *Introducing students to a new environment and experiences and supporting them through the challenges this represents, observing the growth which can be the result of a positive Study Abroad experience.*