



Press Release - September 2020

The European Association of Study Abroad (EUASA) has recently released the results of a survey of Resident Directors (RDs) across Europe conducted in 2019. The survey examined RD identities, responsibilities, salaries, challenges and benefits, in the first-ever census of study abroad leaders who are responsible for program operations on the ground in Europe.

Project Team Leader, Dr. Stephen Robinson, Director and Professor at Champlain College's Dublin, Ireland Campus, says the project "was a great opportunity to get a snapshot of the roles and responsibilities of Resident Directors across Europe. It really shines a light on the complexity of what we are asked, and expected, to do for our students and institutions. Sometimes we feel we have the best jobs in the world, yet there are significant frustrations as well. Many Resident Directors will tell you they don't feel a part of the overall conversation on the development of study abroad, or even the conversations taking place back on their home campus, and those sentiments come through in the results."

The important findings of this study, compiled in the [recently released report](#), should be of interest to both on-site study abroad professionals as well as those at the home and sending institutions in the US and Canada. It is hoped that the wider international higher education community will take notice of some specific findings, such as the particular challenges that RDs face and issues of communication, that are widely reported in the survey results.

"Most of us work remotely for institutions on a different continent, and that results in lots of challenges, from cultural misunderstandings to a sense of disconnect with the home institution", Robinson also said.

Project members, Christine Kelly-Vereda, Director of the Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad (CASA) Center in Granada, Spain, and Kirk Duclaux, Director of Italian Programs in Italy, University of Oklahoma, found the survey results to be both momentous and affirming.

As a veteran in the field of international higher education, Kelly-Vereda found that "this study finally gives a powerful voice to a community of often underheard educators and professionals who are experts, not only in this field, but in managing the intricacies and specific challenges of directing programs on site. I have always said that the only people who truly understand the role of a resident director are other resident directors. It is time for that to change and this report should go a long way to helping others, our colleagues at both home and host institutions, to better understand our jobs and the pressures under which we work on a daily basis."

Duclaux found this thorough study on the role of European Resident Directors to be illuminating. "The study reconciles anecdotal information about RDs and their roles within the larger education abroad system with a true, in the trenches viewpoint that reflects what RDs are actually responsible for on an everyday basis - this in their own words. RDs are uniquely

accountable for the mental, physical, and academic well-being of their students during a study abroad period in which even the most intrepid students might struggle. While they are witness to the wonderful transformation of the egocentric study abroad student into a globally competent citizen, they also must navigate administrative and cultural incongruencies, different time zones, arcane legal parameters across continents, and lately in the midst of a pandemic, global health regulations that vary across borders. Fancy a job that allows you to retire from academia in peace and quiet, perhaps with a view? Then the RD job is not for you!”

The [European Association for Study Abroad](#) has since 2016 fostered a large auxiliary network for local resident directors and on site staff (much like its national member associations) in order to support the over +500 programs located in Europe.

EUASA Chair, Pia Schneider, comments, “This is the first study which sheds light on the complex job tasks of the RD and is thus helpful to dismantle stereotypes of what looks like a *‘dolce far niente’* job. RDs run mini-campuses and need problem-solving skills in a great multitude of areas. In addition to taking care of the logistics, they replace sick colleagues, assemble Ikea furniture, change linens, repair a sink or, to quote a colleague, ‘I could be changing light bulbs in the morning before meeting the Minister for Education for lunch.’”

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