



# How to Write an Effective Program Listing on GoAbroad.com

## *Insider Tips from the GoAbroad Content Experts*

With more than 18,000 verified program listings on GoAbroad.com, when writing *your* program listing you want to find a way to make *yours* stand out. If you have written and published a program listing on GoAbroad before, then you know that making your listing really pop can be easier said than done, since each program listing requires more than just a few sentences about the program.

Acting as the primary method of communicating with travelers looking to study, volunteer, intern, work, adventure, or teach abroad, it is important that you create program listings that are not only informative, but also entertaining. Speaking to your audience has never been more important.

So, without further ado, here's our best advice on how to write an effective listing for your program on GoAbroad.com:

### 1. Describe it, and describe it well.

Travelers searching for the best abroad programs will be looking at a lot of listings, and nowadays it is simply too laborious to call up program providers and ask questions about their program listings directly.

When creating your program listings, be sure to include as much relevant information about the program as you can. But, make sure you are adding the information in the correct place too! Don't skip out on the sections about program duration, age requirements, participation guidelines, what's included in the program, accommodation options, language skill requirements, and qualifications needed. These are all essential things prospective participants will want to look over!



## 2. Make titles that are click-worthy.

If your program listing title isn't good, then your listing is irrelevant. Prospective participants will only click on something that jumps out to them! So...

*How do you write listing titles that garner more clicks to your listings and traffic to your website, which in turn can translate in to more leads for you? How do you write a title that draws people in, makes these people talk about your program, and does not make them feel like they got suckered into clicking on something?*

**First, you need to make sure the title is actually about the listing.** You don't want people clicking on your program listing result expecting one thing and getting something else. Most people want to know what's inside for them before they decide whether or not to click through to learn more. Tricking them into clicking by showing them what they want, but not giving them what they actually want on the program listing page is a big no-no.

**Next, stay focused on what your program is all about.** If it's a study program, then say so in the title. If it's a study program in Italy or a bunch of different places, then make sure that is obvious to prospective participants. Remember that your title is limited to just a couple dozen characters, so stick to the words that show your program's true colors.

Needless to say, your program listing title has to support the program summary that comes after it. If your title doesn't support your summary, then your listing is toast! You should create these two components in tandem to be sure each one is supporting the other effectively. Read more about writing program summaries below.

## 3. Tell them what they want to hear in the program summary.

The Program Summary is perhaps the most important part of your listing. It's your pitch; it's your opportunity to tell potential participants about your program and share important details, but you need to keep it short and sweet too. Start off by saying what your program is about and where it is located, because this is the most basic of basics that every reader will want to know.

**Above all else, emphasize the positives.** GoAbroad users tend to already know what they want in an international program. If they want to study abroad, then they might already know, let's say, that they want to study in Italy. They might even know they want to learn Italian *and*



get transferable academic credits. They won't necessarily know, however, what your program offers that others do not. This is why focusing on the benefits of your program, defining characteristics, location information, unique features, special activities, or excursions will get them to click through to your website and apply for your program.

**Talk directly to your target audience.** Use the active voice often, and the passive voice sparingly, if at all. Keep paragraphs simple and concise, breaking up content into short, readable chunks of related information.

Here's a perfect example of a well-written program summary introduction:

*"Hone artistic skills in different fields at The Aegean Center for the Fine Arts in Florence, Italy. American, European, and Australian students can experience and explore vibrant Italian culture for an entire academic year. Courses offered include Music, Photography, and Art History."*

**Insider tip:** Remember that the first few sentences of your Program Summary, along with the Program Listing Title, will represent your program listing on GoAbroad.com's Search Results Pages too!

## 4. Share What Makes Your Program Great in the Highlights

Those who don't have time to read through the program summary will skip to the highlights, so make them count! The program highlights are your chance to enumerate five of the most unique, enticing, and attractive features of your program in five 200-character sentences.

The best highlights are those that use strong action words to start, as opposed to listing down phrases like, "Excursions Included" or "Optional safari." Imagine rewriting these phrases into full sentences that begin with strong action words: "Join dozens of excursions to a variety of towns and cities and other sights" or "Opt to go on a two-day safari in the African bush after the program."

Of course, this isn't the only way to write program listing highlights. You can go for descriptive sentences, such as "The campus has a wide range of amenities, including swimming pool and sports facilities, libraries, and cafés" or "Table Mountain is right next door and you can hike up to its peak for a spectacular view of Cape Town" too.

No matter which way you decide to write your highlights, just remember to keep them original and concise!



## 5. The don'ts of writing for GoAbroad.com.

- **Don't use abbreviations**, especially "etc." Etcetera is such a lazy word, and etc. is a lazy way of enumerating what your program offers. Instead of saying "etc.", say "and more" or "and many more."
- **Don't use acronyms without first spelling out what it means.** This is especially important in listings about programs offered to anyone in the world. TEFL or TESOL in a TEFL certification course listing is okay, as is GPA for study abroad programs, but don't go overboard. Not everyone knows that your university goes by USC or volunteer company goes by the acronym ISDFDRS.
- **Don't use ampersands**, unless it's part of a proper noun, such as the company or organization name. The word "and" is just three letters, so it makes little sense using two keystrokes (Shift+7) to replace three keystrokes (a+n+d).
- **Don't include a lengthy company description in your program listing.** There is space for that on your provider page. However, **do include a sentence or two about what your company or organization** does in relation to the program. *Do you run the program? Are you a headhunting agency for schools, companies, or organizations?*
- **Avoid using too many articles**, such as "The," "A," and "An" if the sentence or paragraph can stand on its own without them. Instead of saying, "the volunteers," simply say, "volunteers."
- **Do use contractions.** They make sentences more conversational and thus more appealing to read. Watch out, however, for the way you contract words as errors in apostrophe placement are more common than you think!
- **Do use the Oxford comma**, also known as the serial comma. They say it's optional; we say it's a must. Take this sentence, for example: "Volunteer in a circus in Romania and have the opportunity to meet fellow volunteers, clowns and lion tamers," which implies that your fellow volunteers are clowns and lion tamers, or that you yourself are a clown or lion tamer!
- **Do write original content for your program listing**, and do NOT copy what is on your website or anywhere else on the internet. Content copied from other sources tends to send the wrong signals to search engines. One of two things will happen if you do this: the search engine will rank the content on the stronger website or all websites with the same copy will get penalized.