

# HOW TO FIND AN INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP



Finding an internship abroad is not an exact science. You need to research so you can learn about all the opportunities available to you. Keep in mind that some internships may be unpaid and some may require tuition or fees. Internship programs often arrange or assist you with housing, and many require working knowledge or fluency of the country's language.

International internships show employers that you are prepared to face new challenges and can adapt to new environments. Students who have worked abroad will be valuable assets as they bring with them work experience, cross-cultural competence, and well-developed social skills.

An international internship is an added bonus to any resume. Interning abroad can make your internship experience more exciting, can make you stand out from your peers, and can give you invaluable work and life experiences to carry with you wherever you may work or travel in the future.

If the adventurous spirit takes you abroad, then an international internship can be a way to earn work experience while living and enjoying new people and their culture. Bon Voyage!

## WHY AN INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP?

What are the benefits of an international internship versus one located in the United States?

Although the answers are numerous, some of the benefits can include:

- The opportunity to travel and experience new cultures
- Fulfill degree requirements while traveling
- Gaining an understanding of work environments in another country
- Making contacts for future employment or for travel
- Showing future employers that you are able to adapt to change and new challenges
- The opportunity to practice or learn a new language

## INDEPENDENT VERSUS PROGRAM INTERNSHIPS

Depending on the internship you choose, your work experience may be paid or unpaid. Even though an internship maybe unpaid, your agency may provide a travel stipend or housing to you. Several internships require you to pay a program fee; these programs generally provide housing and a supplemental language course as an accompaniment to your internship experience. There are other differences, too. Before applying for an internship, keep in mind what you hope to gain from your experience.

**Independent-** Housing may or may not be provided, contacts within company, health insurance or access to company services, stipend for travel.

**Program-** Housing often provided, airport transfers/pickups, 24-hour assistance with problems, help with visa processing and deadlines, official documentation such as transcripts, possible tours on the weekends, and program training.

## BEFORE YOU FLY

### What to bring

- Learn what kind of electrical outlets are common to the country you are visiting, and buy an adapter, if needed.
- Don't travel with excessive amounts of money or credit cards.
- Invest in a book of translations pertaining to the native language of your destination.
- Keep an emergency list of important numbers and addresses.
- Familiarize yourself with items that are allowed to be taken out of and brought into the U.S.

### Make the appropriate financial preparations

- Learn the exchange rate and how the value of the dollar compares to the country's currency.
- Call your credit card company and let them know you will be using your card abroad.

### Make the appropriate health prep

- Find out if immunizations are required prior to traveling; stay up to date on vaccinations.

### Double-check with Texas State

- Make sure that you have received approval from your academic advisor if you are taking the internship for academic credit; remember to pay tuition to the University for that class.

### Be informed

- Research the country and where you will be staying before your trip (i.e. culture, local laws, dress, food, traditions, etc). An excellent resource is GoinGlobal, the link can be found on the Career Services website.

## WHILE ABROAD

- Keep a card with the address of your hotel or of your home with you at all times.
- Leave expensive jewelry and electronics at home. If you bring them with you, don't flash them around.
- While traveling, store your passport in a secure location. Be sure to bring copies of your passport and driver's license or student ID card with you. Always have your health insurance card available.
- Don't dress in a manner that will draw unwanted attention. Some cultures do not dress as casually as the U.S.
- Don't carry all of your cash with you at one time.
- Avoid being alone late at night. Learn which areas of your location are deemed unsafe for travelers.

## INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP TIPS

**Talk with people.** Don't be intimidated because you are a student. People are sometimes too busy to roll out the red carpet, so you have to make the first move to talk with co-workers and supervisors.

**Ask for things to do.** Be a self-starter. Solving problems and taking the initiative are the best ways to stand out from the crowd.

**Read everything you can get your hands on.** You won't find everything you need to know in the training manual. Read contracts, letters, memos, press releases, and trade publications. These will help you become more informed about all the elements of the business. Remember: certain things must be kept confidential.

**Go the extra mile.** Ask to attend meetings and events, learn how things really get done.

**Focus on networking.** You never know when you may need to network with this contact or can use a person for a job reference in the future.

**Communicate.** Not only is communication different in other countries; so are accents. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you don't understand something.

**Relax!** The key word to an enjoyable experience is **flexibility**. Every culture is different and it takes time to adjust and to grasp how things operate.

## PASSPORT INFORMATION

Passports take 10-12 weeks to receive. **APPLY EARLY!** To apply for a passport, visit [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) and download the appropriate forms. To apply for a passport you will need a birth certificate. You may need to provide adequate time to obtain your birth certificate from your parents or the Clerk of Court in the county you were born in. Keep in mind that other supporting documentation is also required.

You will need to get two 2"x2" passport photos taken; these can be made at many photo centers such as Target, Walgreens, and CVS.

Be sure to accurately complete the application and attach the necessary supporting documents to improve your chances of a speedy process at the nearest passport center. In San Marcos, the center is located at the City Clerk's Office, 630 E. Hopkins St. The telephone number is 512.393.8086.



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LBJ Student Center Suite 5-7.1 • 512.245.2645 • [CareerServices@txstate.edu](mailto:CareerServices@txstate.edu)