

INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS

by William Nolting

Why do you want to go? Many returned education abroad students seek additional avenues after graduation for affording another opportunity abroad to strengthen their language fluency and/or acquire additional exposure to different cultures for anticipated future graduate study. If money is tight, consider locations where the exchange rate is more advantageous. For an example, consider Central or Latin American versus Spain which is on the Euro. Short-term paid work abroad programs, teaching English abroad, or volunteering abroad.

Where do you want to go? Many internships related to international careers, especially ones with international organizations, are actually located here in the U.S.—especially in centers of international activity such as Washington DC or New York. But it is often possible to combine an international internship with an overseas location.

How do you want to do it? Tuition-based study abroad internships sponsored by universities provide credit towards your degree. Financial aid can usually be used to help meet expenses. Tuition costs range widely. Unpaid, non-academic internships account for the majority of internships, both in the U.S. and abroad. If living costs are high, these may be as expensive as tuition-charging internships but without the benefits of credit and financial aid. The main benefit of such internships will be professionally-related experience and better prospects for career positions.

Volunteer positions abroad sometimes provide room and board, which can make them less expensive than unpaid internships. The **Peace Corps** pays well, although this is a two-year commitment. Repayment of educational loans can often be deferred during volunteer work (check with your lender and the volunteer agency). Volunteer positions may be the best option for those interested in careers having to do with developing countries.

Paid internship abroad are often rare, and are available mainly in applied fields such as business and engineering.

When should you apply? For summer internships, it's best to apply in the fall. Some programs, such as the **U.S. State Department**, have deadlines as early as **November 1**. **IAESTE** and others have deadlines in early December. Study abroad internships usually have application deadlines the semester before the term of the internship.

Types of Internships and International Organizations

1. Study Abroad Internships. Hundreds of overseas internships are sponsored by universities and for undergraduates are the most easily available option. Advantages include credit, applicability of financial aid, and a variety of subjects and locations. Disadvantages are cost and sometimes unpredictability of placement. Some of the best web sites for finding study abroad internships are the internship section of www.transitionsabroad.com, www.iiepassport.org, www.goabroad.com, and www.studyabroad.com.

2. Internship Exchange/Work Permit Programs.

A few reciprocal exchange programs offer paying internships in applied fields. If you find your own internship abroad, these organizations can also assist in obtaining a work permit. Best web sites for finding these programs are www.transitionsabroad.com and Univ. of Michigan's International Center, www.umich.edu/~icenter/swt/.

AIESEC (100-plus countries), a student-run international organization with chapters on many campuses, offers business-related internships open to all majors. AIESEC members have preference in getting these internships. The

BUNAC work abroad programs are the only ways to get a work permit without a job offer. The programs are available for Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

IAESTE (80-plus countries) and the American-Scandinavian Foundation (Scandinavian countries) have placements in engineering and natural sciences, while **AIPT** offers hotel and culinary programs.

CDS (Germany) has several programs in business and technical fields for undergraduates, graduates, and professionals. These organizations accept applications directly from students.

The International Cooperative Education Program (ICEP)

offers paid placements in a number of fields. Knowledge of a foreign language is required (e.g., German, French, Spanish, Dutch, Japanese, Chinese). Internships International, the Center for Interim Programs, and others offer low-cost placements in unpaid internships.

3. Internships Directly with International Organizations.

Some organizations in international sectors offer internship programs with a centralized formal application process. Many do not have formal internships but often respond positively to applications from individuals who propose their own "internship." In general, the larger and better-known the organization, the more competitive the application process for internships will be. Smaller and more locally-based organizations, often overlooked by applicants, may offer some of the best internship experiences.

A) Government. The U.S. State Department and other federal agencies overseas and in the U.S. offer internships (usually unpaid) for undergraduates and graduate students. Application is competitive. **Apply by November 1 for summer, March 1 for fall, July 1 for winter.** State and city governments have many internship possibilities, often overlooked by applicants, in their international trade offices. Internships with members of Congress who sit on international committees are also possible. A U.S. State Department Internship is a great way to see if a career in

diplomacy is for you. Most are unpaid, but free housing may be provided. Eligibility: U.S. citizens who are undergraduates (junior or senior) or graduate students who will continue as students. Apply via the State Department's web site, www.careers.state.gov. You may also apply for career positions with the U.S. State Department from the same web site.

The **U.S. Peace Corps** is possibly the best (and best-paying) entry-level job for anyone interested in grassroots development work overseas. Unlike in a State Department job, you live and work with ordinary local people. Eligibility: U.S. citizens, generally for those with at least a bachelor's degree; two-year commitment. Peace Corps pays all expenses plus over \$6,000 ("resettlement allowance") at the end of service. Full training and support is provided. Educational loans can be deferred and some partially canceled. Some tuition support is available for later graduate study. **Contact: Peace Corps, P.O. Box 948, Washington DC 20526; 800-424-8580; www.peacecorps.gov.**

The **Woodrow Wilson Foundation** administers several scholarship/internship programs related to U.S. government agencies, for which women and minorities are especially encouraged to apply. Most of these scholarships fund several years of study and include summer institutes and internships. Applicants must apply as sophomores (for 3-year scholarships) or as seniors (for graduate school scholarships, for a shorter period of time).

For the most up-to-date information and applications, see the Woodrow Wilson web site, www.woodrow.org/public-policy. Other U.S. government departments that offer international internships and career positions include the **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)**, www.usaid.gov, the **U.S. Commercial Service**, www.export.gov, and the **U.S. Department of Commerce**, www.commerce.gov.

B) Public Multinationals (also known as "international organizations"). Multi-government giants like the United Nations, the European Community and the World Bank offer internships. They are often unpaid and highly competitive (paid positions are usually reserved for graduate students), and most positions for Americans are in the U.S. Most internships in the "Key Resources" list have information on internships with these organizations. Some organizations are designated as officially recognized international organizations. Work permits for these employers are easier to get. The **U.S. State Department's** web site, www.careers.state.gov, has links to the job sites of many major international organizations.

C) Private Enterprise. Organized international internship programs are sponsored by Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, and others. These are sometimes restricted to students in MBA programs.



Many undergraduates, however, have arranged overseas internships with U.S. or host-country companies, especially by using the CIEE or BUNAC programs. Most internships with private industry pay enough to cover basic living expenses, though usually not the cost of transatlantic airfare. Try web sites such as Monster.com, or try Google searches for specific companies—using search terms such as “company name + internship.” In fact, Google works amazingly well for most types of organizations, assuming you have specific ones in mind.

D) Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), typically nonprofit, include humanitarian or human-rights watchdogs like Amnesty International, health care providers like CARE, research institutes like the Bermuda Biological Station, and organizations supporting international educational exchange such as the Institute of International Education. NGOs typically welcome interns in their U.S.-based offices and sometimes by direct application to overseas offices. Internships with NGOs are often unpaid. Two excellent web sites for exploring internship and job opportunities with NGOs are *Idealist.org*, *www.idealist.org* (some 47,000 organizations in 165 countries).

E) Educational Organizations. Teachers are needed worldwide. Positions fall into two categories: Teaching English as a foreign language, for which no other credential than a bachelor’s degree is usually needed, and teaching K-12 in overseas schools taught in English, for which teaching certification is usually required. Most teaching positions require a commitment of at least one academic year. Teaching at the university level nearly always requires an advanced degree. See also the web sites of **Univ. of Michigan’s International Center**, *www.umich.edu/~icenter/swt/*, and **Dave’s ESL Café**, *www.eslcafe.com*.

F) Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) offer many overseas placements and are one of the only possibilities for work in developing countries. Positions are typically designated as “volunteer” or service positions, rather than internships. These range from secular organizations, such as **Amigos de las Americas** or **WorldTeach**, to religious-sponsored groups. While some religious groups insist on affiliation, others, such as the **Brethren** or the **American Friend Service Committee**, do not. Short-term placements (of less than one year) will often charge fees, or at best provide room and board. A few long-term placements provide for all the expenses of the volunteer, most notably the **Peace Corps** (a U.S. government program which funds positions with host-country voluntary organizations). Again “volunteer” positions offer the possible benefit of deferring educational loan repayments during the volunteer assignment. See the web site of the **International Volunteer Programs Association**, *www.volunteerinternational.org*, the volunteer section of *www.transitionsabroad.com*, *www.internabroad.com*, and especially the great new book, **How to Live Your Dream or Volunteering Overseas** (authors Collins, DeZerega, and Heckscher).

GauchosLink

