

# How to prepare for INTERNATIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

HEGI FAMILY CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## ***Building International Experience***

*Before you go abroad you can begin to build relationships and learn about other cultures by:*

- ♦ *Learning a new language*
- ♦ *Taking international courses*
- ♦ *Becoming friends with international students*
- ♦ *Joining international organizations/clubs*
- ♦ *Networking with professionals in your field who work internationally*

## ***Building Your International Resume***

*You will need a polished resume for your international job search. Emphasize your international experience. List any languages in which you are fluent enough to conduct business conversations. Study abroad and international travel are relevant because they reflect an interest in other cultures. For international resume examples and writing tips, check the career center's website: [www.smu.edu/careers/international](http://www.smu.edu/careers/international)*

Living and working abroad can provide great opportunities for personal development and in-depth experience in another culture. Your knowledge of another language can be enhanced, your flexibility and creativity can be developed as you position yourself to meet the challenges of a career in the global market.

## **TYPES OF INTERNATIONAL WORK**

### **Summer, Seasonal or Short Term Jobs**

These jobs tend to be geared toward people who want to work while seeing different parts of the world. Examples of these jobs include jobs in retail, tourism, and hospitality and jobs in the service sector. They usually do not require experience in a specific field of study but focus on the experience gained by the individual. The BUNAC ([www.bunac.org](http://www.bunac.org)) work abroad program is the best way to get a work permit without a prior job offer and provides information for jobs in Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

- ♦ **Tourism:** Working in the tourism industry will give you many opportunities to meet new people and possibly make contacts for future employment. A broad range of jobs are available in tour agencies, resorts, cruise lines, hotels, and restaurants or pubs. There are however drawbacks to working in this industry. You may have to put in long hours, work weekends and work conditions that aren't always the cleanest. This type of work is seasonal and many companies recruit months before the start of the season. Applications are usually submitted in March for summer employment. A good place to start is with US companies that are global, for example, **Disney Cruise Lines** (<http://disney.go.com/disneycareers/index.html>) or **The Hilton Resorts and Hotels**. ([http://hiltonworldwide1.hilton.com/en\\_US/ww/people/employment/international/opportunities.do](http://hiltonworldwide1.hilton.com/en_US/ww/people/employment/international/opportunities.do)) If you plan to work for an international employer where English is not the major language, you may need to have a working knowledge of the native language and communicate with the employer in that language.
- ♦ **Au pairs:** Au pairs have a unique employment situation, in that they live with their employer. Au pairs usually work about 5 hours a day and may have the weekends off. Some evening work is usually required. Most of the time they are provided with a private room and full board. It is helpful to talk with prospective employers well in advance and clearly define your hours and duties to make sure that the position is a "fit" for both of you. Au pair positions can be found through local listings in newspapers or through dedicated agencies such as **International Educational Services** ([www.planetaupair.com](http://www.planetaupair.com)), which offers placement in Spain and other Western European countries.

### **Volunteer work**

International organizations often provide opportunities to volunteer. Volunteering is one way to get your foot in the door of an organization. Volunteer opportunities are available in a wide range of locations and disciplines. Some provide room and board. If you are focusing on developing countries, volunteer positions are often your best bet for acquiring international experience. They may provide a "pay off" as you enter the job market after graduation by giving you valuable experiences to include on your resume and discuss during interviews.

Many organizations promoting social change offer volunteer positions. Understand the mission of any organization before joining or working for it.

#### Resources

A notable volunteer organization is the **Peace Corps** ([www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov)). Volunteers make a 2-year commitment to work with teachers and communities in developing countries to help them take charge of their own futures.

**Volunteer Services Overseas** ([www.VSOCanada.org](http://www.VSOCanada.org)) is an organization that places over 800 volunteers aged 20-70 around the world each year in the fields of education, health, natural resources, business, social work, librarianship, media, law, the technical trades and engineering.

**Global Volunteers** ([www.globalvolunteers.org](http://www.globalvolunteers.org)), a private nonprofit, non-sectarian development organization, was founded with the goal of helping to establish a foundation for peace through mutual international understanding.

**Department of Public Information** ([www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/asp/form.asp](http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/asp/form.asp)) at the United Nations Headquarters provides a non-governmental section which contains 1,400 NGOs worldwide that are associated with the DPI.

#### Internships

An internship is an on-site work experience that is directly related either to your major field of study or your career interest. Job duties are professional in nature. Although many overseas internships are unpaid, they can greatly enhance your international career. Just as with internships in the U.S., working with an employer in an internship will allow them to see your talents and skills. For international employers this could lead to possible long-term employment.

There are a number of international internships that are based in the United States, particularly in the Capital and New York City. For example, the Canadian Embassy offers internships in Washington, DC. Contact foreign embassies in the US using **EmbassyWeb** ([www.embassy.org](http://www.embassy.org)) as part of your internship search. Several offer summer and/or semester-long experiential learning. Positions with these organizations are often overlooked by students, but may be more easily available than internships with well-known organizations.

**The US Department of State** offers Spring, Summer, and Fall internships. The application deadline is November 1 for Summer internships. Students must be returning to their academic institution following their internship. While most of the internships are usually in Washington DC, there are opportunities for students to go abroad as Junior Foreign Service Officers.

The **US Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service** offers an International Internship Program that provides international agricultural experience to college students that will assist them in making career choices. Internships are available for Spring, Summer, and Fall.

Large multi-government organizations, such as **The United Nations** ([www.unsystem.org](http://www.unsystem.org)) offer internship opportunities through different UN offices for graduate and post-graduate students. **The World Bank** ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)) offers undergraduate and graduate interns practical knowledge and management experience with members of thematic groups (TG) in a mutual learning and sharing environment.

#### Resources

**Co-opting and Interning Abroad** ([www.petersons.com/stdyabrd/abroad6.html](http://www.petersons.com/stdyabrd/abroad6.html)) This is a list put out by Peterson that contains practical advice on interning abroad and a list of questions to ask before going abroad.

**Hegi Family Career Development Center's** list of International Resources ([www.smu.edu/career](http://www.smu.edu/career)) Job listing sites recommended by Career Center staff.

**AIIESEC** ([www.aiiesec.org](http://www.aiiesec.org)) with a 100-plus countries list is a student-run international organization with chapters on many campuses, offers business-related internships open to all majors. **AIIESEC** members have preference in getting these internships.

#### Working for the Government

There are many types of jobs with the government in areas such as, intelligence, foreign policy, economics, translation and research.

During the last decade, the government administration has worked to streamline its process, resulting in decreasing the number of workers. This doesn't mean that there aren't any jobs overseas with the Federal Government. International relations is becoming even more important as technology brings us closer and economies depend on each other.

#### Resources

**The US Agency for International Development (USAID)** ([www.usaid.gov/careers](http://www.usaid.gov/careers)) provides a list of positions available overseas and domestic, including all levels of foreign service agents.

**FedWorld** ([www.fedworld.gov/jobs/jobsearch.html](http://www.fedworld.gov/jobs/jobsearch.html)) lists positions by state and overseas.

**World Directory of Think Tanks** ([www.nira.go.jp/ice/index.html](http://www.nira.go.jp/ice/index.html)) are maintained by the National Institute for Research Advancement.

**WWW Virtual Library: International Affairs Resources** ([www.etoyn.edu/vl/research.html](http://www.etoyn.edu/vl/research.html)) are international relations think tanks and institutes in the U.S. and abroad. Categories include specialized fields such as Peace, Conflict Resolution, and International Security, American Foreign Relations, Global Environment, and International Development.

#### Research Positions

Research positions are for those interested in fields such as public policy, politics or international affairs. Researchers focus on writing papers and examining theoretical positions in order to gain new knowledge and understanding. Research centers or "think tanks" are based both in the US and world wide and look at international issues such as development, world peace, and arms control.

#### General Resources

**University of Michigan's Political think tank resources** ([www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/psthink.html#comp](http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/psthink.html#comp))

**International relations think tanks here in the US and abroad** ([www.etoyn.edu/vl/research.html](http://www.etoyn.edu/vl/research.html))

**World think tank directory** ([www.nira.go.jp/ice/index.html](http://www.nira.go.jp/ice/index.html))

**IFES** ([www.ifes.org](http://www.ifes.org)) has a very useful website with links to allied organizations dealing with human rights, international development, government agencies, research and think tanks, and more.

**Directory of development organizations worldwide** ([www.devdir.org](http://www.devdir.org)) includes: international organizations, government ministries, private sector institutions, development agencies, universities, research and training institutes, NGOs/PDOs, grant-makers, banks, microfinance institutions, and development consulting firms working to promote private sector development and poverty reduction. Searchable by geographical region and specific country.

**The Foundation Center** ([www.lnp.fdncenter.org/finder.html](http://www.lnp.fdncenter.org/finder.html)) has an online database of over 70,000 private and public foundations in the US that you can search by keywords or location.

### JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

#### Work Permits and Visas

Students who want to work abroad usually must obtain work permits and visas. No employer can legally hire you abroad without authorization, which varies from country to country. Getting a work permit is easiest when done through a company that regularly acquires work permits for its employees. If a work permit through a company is not an option, contact the embassy of the country you are targeting for further information. This can take time so plan ahead. Go to **The Electronic Embassy Help and Resource Center** for an online list of embassies. ([www.embassy.org/hrc/index.html](http://www.embassy.org/hrc/index.html))

There are reciprocal government agreements for student work exchanges in Australia, Canada, Ireland and New Zealand. Students and new graduates can get short-term work permits through the **Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)** ([www.ciee.org/work](http://www.ciee.org/work))

**BUNAC** ([www.bunac.org](http://www.bunac.org)) provides work permits for Australia, Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, and Canada  
**Chambers of Commerce** includes a directory of chamber of Commerce worldwide (<http://clickcity.com/index2.htm>)

**Iagora: Visa Requirements** (<http://www.iagora.com/itravel/tools/intl/embassies.html>) is a database that contains information on visa requirements for any country.

**US State Department - Bureau Consular Affairs** - Important information for traveling and obtaining visas.

**Workpermit.com: Immigration Services** - Provides information on obtaining visas for many countries.

#### Travel & Live Abroad Resources

**EscapeArtist Home Page: Overseas Living** ([www.escapeartist.com](http://www.escapeartist.com)) Guide to international living, links to any info you could think of and some you haven't yet.

**Iagora: International Travel, Multilingual, Work, Study** ([www.iagora.com](http://www.iagora.com)) Country and cultural information, links to info on living abroad and chat with people from around the world.

**Lonely Planet Online** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) Website of the popular travel guide publisher. Has lots of travel info and tips.

**Rick Steves' Europe Through the Back Door (ETBD)** ([www.ricksteves.com](http://www.ricksteves.com)) Country and other great information and tips for traveling abroad.

#### Country Resources

**CIA World Factbook 2002** ([www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html)) Country maps, geography, demographic, transportation and economic data, along with additional information in appendices.

**Global Statistics** ([www.xist.org](http://www.xist.org)) Country profiles including population growth, capitals, area, cities and economic statistics.

**InfoNation** ([www.un.org/pubs/CyberSchoolBus/infonation/e\\_infonation.htm](http://www.un.org/pubs/CyberSchoolBus/infonation/e_infonation.htm)) Database which compares current statistics for Member States of the UN.

**Library of Congress Country Studies** (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs>) Country information divided by chapter and other subheadings, including transportation, cultural identity, geography, and health concerns.

**National Geographic Map Machine** ([www.nationalgeographic.com/resources/ngo/maps](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/resources/ngo/maps)) "Map Machine Atlas" has maps, flags and quick profiles for many countries.

**Department of State: International Information Programs** (<http://usinfo.state.gov>) News, policy, and information for countries around the world.

**Salary Calculator** ([www2.homefair.com/calc/salcalc.html](http://www2.homefair.com/calc/salcalc.html)) Includes international sites to compare the cost of living in different locales.

**The Internationalist** ([www.internationalist.com](http://www.internationalist.com)) Access to international business news, international phone rates, a currency converter, worldwide weather and more.

**The Web of Culture** ([www.webofculture.com](http://www.webofculture.com)) Educates about effective cross-cultural communication in the global marketplace. Includes literature reviews and a panel of experts to answer questions.

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Visit us anytime at [www.smu.edu/career](http://www.smu.edu/career)





