**Work, Intern, Volunteer & Research Abroad (WIVRA) Programs: A Document for Students**

**Exploring Intern Abroad Programs**

**Start with Your Campus Resources**

Does your study abroad or career office have internship abroad programs specifically for students from your university? This is an important first step as these programs may be well aligned to your needs and fit in with your academic plan and schedule. Better yet, the hard part of reviewing and approving has already been done for you to narrow down the options. If you don’t find the ideal fit in the preapproved options it may be time to look further. When doing this initial campus exploration it’s also a good time to gather resources about options for credit, scholarships, or other support whether you’re doing a program through your school or independently. Find out who can help you and how and be sure to reconnect throughout your process.

**Finding Your Own Internship Abroad**

While this document is focused on fee-based internship placement programs you can also find an internship abroad on your own and future versions of this document may expand upon that. Some multinational companies or government and non-government organizations have global internship options through their recruiting websites or you may approach an organization directly about opportunities, or even connect with alumni working overseas. This is a much more independent option which will take more legwork, but can result in a great opportunity as well. It can be a good option for an independent student who has lived abroad before.

Some of the questions below about fee-based programs may also be relevant to identifying an opportunity on your own.

**Fee-based Internship Placement Programs**

A fee-based internship placement program helps to match you to an internship opportunity in your field in the location of your choice. They charge a fee for the services they provide you in this process. There are many programs out there so it can be overwhelming to review and select one. The next few pages will give you some things to keep in mind and to ask when comparing programs and making a selection that works best for you.

**Things to Keep in Mind About Fee-based Programs**

- **Location > Internship:** Unlike applying directly to an internship position, you are usually applying to a program in a specific location and then being matched with your internship. If you are set on being in a specific country this can be ideal, but you do need to be ready to wait on the internship placement and be comfortable with some ambiguity until it is finalized.

- **Placement timelines:** Depending on the program and your field of interest, the placement may be part of the application process or you may not get final details until right before (or right after) you arrive.

- **Compensation:** Most internship placements will be unpaid. There are some cases when lunch or a stipend may be provided, but you should not expect payment as it is the exception so look at programs closely.

- **Extras:** Some programs may include (or have optional add-ons) of local excursions, networking events, language classes, or other academic options. This is an important comparison point, depending on your interest in these extras.

- **Visas:** In some countries, it is required that you obtain a specific type of visa in order to legally complete an internship. While the internship placement program will usually help you with this process, be prepared to pay for
this in addition to your program fee if it is not included. Note that visas can be a very complicated part of the intern abroad experience—whether with a program or independent!

- **Scholarships**: Some programs have scholarships available for students. It is good to apply early and ask about any opportunities.

- **Academics**: There may be language or other course options included, or they may be not-for-credit. If you need or want credit from your university or to transfer credit for your internship program, you will need to speak to the appropriate people at your school about the steps for this process (This may be your Career Services Office, Study Abroad Office, Registrar’s Office and/or your Academic Advisor).

**Things to Consider When Exploring Fee-Based Intern Abroad Programs**

There are many, many programs out there that can help place you in an internship abroad. Even though some internship abroad programs may come recommended and be pre-approved by your school or university, not only are there are many more options to consider, but you should ALWAYS be doing your own research to compare the programs available to you so that you feel confident that the program you select is worth the cost and services they are providing you. These questions will help you get started.

**Organization’s Track Record**

- How long has the organization been around? How long have they run programs with an internship component?
- How many interns have they placed over the years? What percentage of applicants is successfully placed?
- How long have they operated in the city that you are considering?
- Where is the organization based?
- Which universities do they partner with?
- Do they have a social media presence? Photos of interns, blogs, etc.
- Can you talk to alumni/references? Do they have data and details on participant satisfaction?

**Understand the Internship Placement Process**

- What meaningful projects will I be asked to complete? Do you have examples of past internships in my field?
- What is the matching process? Will I be applying to specific positions or matched? Will there be an interview with the host?
- Will I be the only intern at my site or are there usually multiple students at each site? If so, how many?
- What language level, if any, is required? How does level affect my placement options?
- What are my options for duration?
- Will the internship be full-time or part-time? If part-time, what other things will I do while there?
- How many students are usually in this country/city at the time I want to go?
- Is there a guarantee of placement (and in your desired field)? When should I expect to hear about my placement?

**Assess the Organization’s Support and Accountability**

- Do they outsource placement matching to other partners? Who will you work with on-site?
- Is there a solid team behind the nice website?
- Do they have direct relationships with the supervisors at the host companies?
- Will you have a dedicated point of contact when in-country who is available 24/7?
- What are their health and safety protocols?
Clarifying the Internship Program Features, Cost & Logistics

- Does the program help with the visa process? What visa is required? *(If you are not a U.S. citizen ask how your visa requirements may differ)*
- Is housing included? Where is it located, and what are the housing options? How do the options affect cost? Will I be living alone, with a family, or with other students? Are the students local or other students from abroad? How are homestays approved?
- When is an application fee or deposit due? Is this refundable? When is the total balance due? What is the cancellation policy?
- What is the total program cost for what I am seeking? What is included in that?
- What are my additional expected expenses beyond that cost (e.g. airfare, meals, local travel, etc.)?
- Can I use financial aid? What scholarships do you have available?
- Ask yourself: how does the total cost of participating on this program compare to the time and cost of finding and coordinating an internship abroad independently (which may also be unpaid)?
- Is academic credit included? Do you offer academic options like language classes, internship reflection, career development or culture classes?
- What happens after the program? Is there an alumni network to tap into after your program? Will you get a certificate of completion or a recommendation?

Where to Search for Internship Abroad Programs

Rather than using Google, your time will be much better spent with a targeted search engine. There are two good search tools that offer listings for programs, including internships abroad (mainly fee-based). Use this to identify programs that you can vet using the questions above. The sites may include reviews or other information, but as with anything you will need to ask the questions that are important to you to compare as each person’s experience is very different.

GoAbroad.com

GoOverseas.com

During & After your Internship Abroad

Remember the resources you identified early on and get support that’s available to you. This may include advising, credit, scholarships or anything else.

Whether your internship was through your school or not be sure to circle back to these resources upon your return to take advantage of their support post-internship. Your study abroad or career office may offer workshops or advising to help you process and incorporate the experience into the next steps in your career exploration.
Exploring Work Abroad Programs

Start with Your Campus Resources

Your campus study abroad and/or career office may very well have resources regarding employment opportunities abroad post-graduation. In addition to recommending certain websites and resources regarding these kinds of opportunities, they may even be able to recommend specific companies, organizations, and work abroad programs that previous students have had success with. Take a few minutes to approach these offices on your campus before starting your own in-depth research – you may be pleasantly surprised with the amount of support you can find! You can always search more on your own after taking this first step.

Things to Keep in Mind about Working Abroad

There are a wide range of opportunities for working abroad, especially right after you graduate from college. Here are some questions to help you determine what type of opportunity you are looking for:

- When do you want to go overseas: Now or a year from now? What is a realistic timetable?
- What’s more important: a prestigious career-oriented job or actually being overseas? In other words, are you willing to be a nanny or a hotel clerk as along as it is overseas?
- Do you want or need more education before you go? Do the jobs you’re interested in require a master’s degree or teacher certification?
- Do you need to get more experience in your career field before you try to find a job overseas?
- Are you willing to volunteer or do you only want a paid job?
- Are you considering going to just one country, one of several countries, or anywhere so long as it’s overseas?
- Have you been overseas before? If not, are you ready and willing to handle the cultural differences?
- How long do you want to work abroad for? One year? Two years? 5 years? Indefinitely?
- What types of housing options are available to you? How much support will you have in coordinating your housing before you depart/when you arrive?
- What types of social opportunities are available for you to get involved with outside of your work (sports teams, language classes, interest groups, etc.)?

Things to Consider When Exploring Work Opportunities Abroad

- What visa is required for what you want to do? Visas can be one of the biggest hurdles to working abroad so do your research on where you want to go and what would be required based on your citizenship. There are some countries that have working holiday visas for citizens of certain countries or programs that will help with work authorization and visa. Be aware that many jobs may only be open to those who already have legal status or work authorization in the country. If you have dual citizenship or are eligible to seek it this could open up options.
- What language skills are needed for where you want to go? Depending on your destination and desired work you may need no or limited skills in the local language or you may need professional working proficiency.
- What is the financial reality of working abroad? Some opportunities may be well compensated, but others may not be so you need to do your research and budget based on the reality of the opportunities you’re exploring.

Types of Work Abroad Opportunities

- Teaching English
- Work placement programs
- U.S. companies abroad or multinational companies
- Government work
- Foreign companies or non-profits
Websites, Programs, & Resources for Working Abroad

- **GoinGlobal** – This is a subscription-based global job listing. If your school subscribes it is a good resource for searching and applying for jobs overseas.
- **Transitionsabroad.com**: This website includes listings as well as articles and resources about traveling, working, teaching, and volunteering abroad.
- **Idealist.org**: A great search engine for non-profit opportunities both in the US and abroad.
- **OverseasJobs.com**: Features overseas jobs and international employment opportunities.
- **Dave’s ESL Cafe**: Provides a comprehensive listing of job opportunities around the world as well as offering job seekers a medium to post their resumes.
- **Government-sponsored English Programs**: Many countries around the world have government-sponsored (and often paid/subsidized) programs for native English speakers to teach at schools in their country. These can be good options to research that often are seeking recent graduates.
- **U.S. Department of State**: For U.S. Citizens, the Department of State has opportunities for government work overseas. For non-U.S. citizens look into work with your home country’s government overseas.
- **GoAbroad.com**: In addition to study and intern abroad programs, also lists teaching and TEFL programs.
- **GoOverseas.com**: In addition to study and intern abroad programs, also lists work, teach, au pair, and various gap year program options.

During & After a Work Abroad Experience

Regardless of the length of the opportunity, working abroad opens up your professional network by connecting you with colleagues who have typically lived, traveled, and worked in many other places around the world. As you meet these new individuals and form relationships with colleagues abroad, take the opportunity to ask them about their career paths and how they came into the professional roles they have today. These individuals can serve as great sources of information regarding potential next steps you want to make in your career should you choose to continue working abroad or not. Fellow alumni working abroad from your university are a great place to start.

In addition to strengthening your network while abroad, make a point to maintain your existing networks at home while you are working abroad to stay abreast of opportunities you may want to take advantage of upon you return. Sending an email every few months to check-in with mentors and former colleagues while you are abroad will go a long way towards maintaining your competitiveness for potential job prospects when you return. Finally, never ever forget to include international work experience on your professional documents and online networking pages. The skills gained from an international work experience, regardless of how relevant that work might be to a current job prospect, are worth highlighting to employers and will help your resume stand out. Even more, your shared experience in a certain country and/or with a certain international employer may be the connection that gets you the job!
Exploring Volunteer Abroad Programs

Start with Your Campus Resources

Your study abroad, career, or service-learning/volunteer office may have volunteer abroad programs specifically for students from your university. Exploring these are an important first step as these programs may be well aligned to your needs and fit in with your academic plan and schedule. Better yet, the hard part of reviewing and approving has already been done for you to narrow down the options. If you don’t find the ideal fit in the preapproved options it may be time to look further. When doing this initial campus exploration it’s also a good time to gather resources about options for credit, scholarships, or other support whether you’re doing a program through your school or independently. Find out who can help you and how and be sure to reconnect throughout your process.

Finding Your Own Volunteer Abroad Program

Volunteer abroad programs offer the opportunity to provide community service and engagement at a grassroots level, working on projects with local community members to meet critical needs, ideally defined by those local community members. Often these projects are focused on serving underprivileged, economically disadvantaged, or developing populations around the world and offer opportunities that range from unskilled to professional work. Through these types of projects, individuals can gain excellent career building skills and cultural immersion in local communities. The length of a placement opportunity can range from a few days to a semester or longer. Many programs exist to connect volunteers with projects in exchange for a fee.

Things to Keep in Mind About Fee-based Programs

A fee-based volunteer placement program helps to match you to a volunteer opportunity in a variety of fields in the location of your choice. They charge a fee for the services they provide you in this process. There are many programs out there, so it can be overwhelming to review and select one. This document provides some things to keep in mind and to ask when comparing programs and making a selection that works best for you.

- **Applications**: Application requirements and processes will vary widely depending on the organization, type of volunteer service, location of the experience, and length of your volunteer placement. Please don't be put off by a lengthy application – it is actually a sign of quality that indicates their concern for a good match

- **Placement process**: Depending on the program and your field of interest, the placement may be part of the application process or you may not get final details until right before (or right after) you arrive.

- **Inclusions**: Every program will vary in terms of what is included in the fee, such as housing assistance or placement, insurance, length of stay, visa assistance, local transportation and excursions, language classes, or other options. This is an important comparison point.

- **Visas**: In some countries, it is required that you obtain a specific type of visa in order to be in the country legally. While the volunteer placement program will often help you with this process, be prepared to pay for this in addition to your program fee if it is not included.

Things to Consider When Exploring Fee-Based Volunteer Abroad Programs

There are many, many programs out there that can help your volunteer abroad. You should ALWAYS do your own research to compare the programs available to you so that you feel confident that the program you select is worth the cost and services they are providing you and that their values and priorities are in line with yours. These questions will help you get started.
Organization’s History and Track Record

- When was the organization founded? How long have they run programs with a volunteer component?
- How many volunteers have they placed over the years?
- Is it exclusively a student program?
- Where do volunteers come from?
- How long have they operated in the country and city that you are considering?
- Where is the organization based?
- Do they have a social media presence? Photos of previous volunteers, blogs, etc.
- Can I talk to alumni/references?
- Is this a faith-based organization? If so, am I comfortable with that and able to work collaboratively regardless of whether their religious affiliation and values are in line with my own?

Understand the Placement Process

- What is the placement process? Does it entail paperwork, an interview, etc.? How should you prepare for this process?
- Will I be applying to specific positions or a general area of service?
- Who coordinates the placement matching to local partners in the host community? Who will you work with on-site?
- Will I be the only volunteer at my site or are there usually multiple students at each site? If so, how many? How many students are usually in this country/city at the time I want to go?
- What language level, if any, is required? How does level affect my placement options?
- Are there physical fitness requirements?
- What are my options for duration of the placement?
- Is there a guarantee of placement (and in your desired field)? When should I expect to hear about my placement?

Assess the Organization’s Support and Accountability

- How are projects developed? Are projects created by local community members or by the placement organization? Are projects long-term and sustainable or one-time activities? Do they reflect needs identified and generated by the community?
- What meaningful projects will I be asked to complete? Do you have examples of past volunteer placements?
- How are my funds distributed? What percentage of my fees go toward logistics and what goes to the local organization?
- Is there a solid team behind the nice website?
- Do they have direct relationships with the supervisors in the volunteer organization?
- Will you have a dedicated point of contact when in-country who is available 24/7?
- What are their health and safety protocols? Who would I contact in the event of an emergency?

Clarifying Program Features, Cost & Logistics

- When is an application fee or deposit due? Is this refundable? When is the total balance due? What is the cancellation policy?
- What is the total program cost for what I am seeking? What is included in that? What are my additional expected expenses beyond that cost (e.g. airfare, meals, local travel, etc.)?
- How does the total cost of participating on this program compare to the time and cost of finding and coordinating a volunteer experience independently?
- Can I use financial aid? What scholarships do they have available?
● Does the provider help with the visa process? What visa is required? Will they assist with the visa process or will I do this on my own? *(If you are not a U.S. citizen ask how your visa requirements may differ)*
● Is housing included? Where is it located, and what are the housing options? How do the options affect cost? Will I be living alone, with a family, or with other students? Are the students local or other students from abroad? How are homestays approved?
● What happens during the preparation stage? How do you get information and advice before you depart? How will I be prepared for adjusting to the local community and culture?
● What is included in the orientation when I arrive abroad? How will I be introduced to the local community and volunteer organization?
● What happens after the program? Is there an alumni network to tap into after your program?

**Websites, Programs, & Resources for Volunteering Abroad**

Rather than using Google, your time will be much better spent with a targeted search engine. There several good search tools that offer listings for volunteer abroad programs. Use these to identify programs that you can vet using the questions above. These sites may include reviews or other information, but as with anything you will need to ask the questions that are important to you to vet as everyone’s experiences are very different.

GoAbroad.com

GoOverseas.com

International Volunteer Programs Association (IVPA) - Listing of volunteer abroad programs with membership with IVPA, which requires adherence to professional standards of conduct for volunteer programs.

Idealist.org – Listing of non-profit opportunities which may include programs as well as organizations directly seeking volunteers.

**During & After Volunteering Abroad**

Remember the resources you identified early on and get support that’s available to you. This may include advising, credit, scholarships or anything else.

Whether your volunteer experience was through your school or not be sure to circle back to these resources upon your return to take advantage of their support. Your study abroad, career or service office may offer workshops or advising to help you process and incorporate the experience into the next steps in your career exploration.
Exploring Research Abroad Programs

Start with Your Campus Resources

Does your study abroad, career, or academic department have research abroad programs specifically for students from your university? This is an important first step as these programs may be well aligned to your needs and fit in with your academic plan and schedule. Better yet, the hard part of reviewing and approving has already been done for you to narrow down the options. If you don’t find the ideal fit in the preapproved options it may be time to look further. When doing this initial campus exploration it’s also a good time to gather resources about options for credit, scholarships, or other support whether you’re doing a program through your school or independently. Find out who can help you and how and be sure to reconnect throughout your process.

Finding Your Own Research Opportunity

Some universities and research institutes have options for students to seek research experiences. This is a much more independent option which will take more legwork, but can result in a great opportunity as well. It can be a good option for an independent student who has traveled or lived abroad before. Faculty members on your campus may have research collaborations overseas and may be able to help with connections. You may identify professors or PIs doing research of interest at institutes and reach out to them directly about opportunities in their labs.

Research Abroad Programs

There are many research opportunities abroad through government, university, or research institute collaborations that specifically seek applicants from schools abroad. There are many programs out there so it can be overwhelming to review and select one. The next sections will give you some things to keep in mind and to ask when comparing options and making a selection that works best for you.

Things to Consider When Exploring Research Abroad Programs

- **Research Experience**: Are you looking for an opportunity to do your own research or to gain lab experience supporting an existing research project? Many programs will be the latter so make sure that you are finding an experience that fits your skills and expectations.

- **Application Process and Timeline**: Deadlines are often early (e.g. fall-winter for the following summer) and you may be required to submit personal statements, research proposals, transcripts, faculty recommendations and more. Identify your options and plan ahead.

- **Funding**: Some programs provide housing, stipends and more whereas others will require you to obtain your own funding or support yourself. It is important to review the support available and research scholarships and funding early if needed.

- **Academics**: There may or may not be a credit-bearing component to a research opportunity. If this is something you are interested in you should explore with your home university as well.

- **Visas**: In some countries, it is required that you obtain a specific type of visa in order to do research. In other countries you may be able to do short-term research without a specific visa in advance. Depending on your nationality you may have additional considerations.
Websites, Programs & Resources for Research Abroad

Example programs:

Amgen Scholars

DAAD Research Internships in Science & Engineering

EuroScholars

Nakatani Research & International Experiences for Students

National Science Foundation: International Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs)

Other options:

Identify major universities/research institutes in countries of interest to look for international research programming

Identify research collaborations and programs specific to your university

Identify research opportunities through the primary professional association for your field of study (e.g. American Chemical Society, etc.)

Research through Fee-Based Placement Programs

Many fee-based internship placement programs have connections with universities or research institutes and can do lab placements for students on their programs. This may be something to explore if you are looking for additional programmatic aspects on-the-ground (such as excursions or language classes) and support through the visa, housing, and life abroad process. There are many, many programs out there so do your research to compare. Ask questions about what research opportunities may be possible so you are pursuing a program that fits your goals.

GoAbroad.com

GoOverseas.com

During & After your Research Abroad

Remember the resources you identified early on and get support that’s available to you. This may include advising, credit, scholarships or anything else.

Whether your research experience was through your school or not be sure to circle back to these resources upon your return to take advantage of their support post-internship. Your study abroad or career office may offer workshops or advising to help you process and incorporate the experience into the next steps in your career exploration.