



STUDY ABROAD | GLOBAL INTERNSHIPS

International Experience

University of Montevallo | Career Development Center

Internships Abroad

Top Tips to Surviving an Internship Abroad
By Brad Richards

An intern in shares his advice for making the most of working abroad.

What I am about to say may not apply to everyone, nor will everyone find value in what I offer. But in all honesty, there are certain people who simply shouldn't be interns or travel abroad. It's sad, a little blunt, yet undoubtedly true because living abroad in a foreign country (where, for the most part, you have absolutely no idea what people are saying) is not for everyone.

So if you are the type of person who has to go home every weekend to see your friends, family or significant other, or need your mommy to make your dinner, you can stop yourself right now as you will simply hate every minute of your trip.



Here are top 10 tips I have in surviving an internship abroad:

1. Come with a clean slate

When going into an internship or traveling abroad it is good to have a little background information on what you are about to experience. But researching and living are two completely different things. Come in wide-eyed and willing to accept everything that comes at you. Take it all in and be willing to embrace the culture. 'Cause if you don't, the culture will reject you.

2. Avoid sensitive topics of discussion

In your travels, you will come into contact with other interns and people from all over the world. Meaning, they all have their own sets of values and beliefs. So topics such as religion, same-sex marriages and abortion are not good topics of conversation over drinks when you have Muslims, Christians and Atheists all sitting together.



3. Step out of your comfort zone

Be a yes man. Don't be that person who sits in their room night after night simply watching TV or Skyping your friends back home. Take advantage of everything that is around you and experience it for all it's worth! It won't be around long and when you move back home with your parents, regret comes and slaps you right in the face.

4. You are here to work

You have a duty as an employee to uphold your end of the contract. Showing up to work and not being ready to work or doing your job poorly does not reflect well on you, on your organization or your country. Step your game up, get your work done and you will reap the benefits.

5. Learn to budget your money

Things may be cheaper abroad but that doesn't mean you can go out for dinner every night and buy a new hat that you barely wear— you will be surprised how fast \$1000 can be spent when you are abroad.

6. Always have an exit strategy

Knowing how to get home at all times is the best thing for you. Having a friend, taxi number or directions to the bus station are all valuable points of information. You don't want to find yourself running 8 km down the metro tracks at 5:30am on a Thursday morning because you have no idea where you are and these tracks are your only means of reference.

7. Avoid phrases that start with, "Well, back home. . ."

Nobody cares what things you miss about home and how this country doesn't have what you want. Complaining about it will not change the fact that this isn't home. This is a new experience and instead of fighting the process, you should learn to adapt. And if you still don't like it, then leave.

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8. Do not be afraid to ask for help

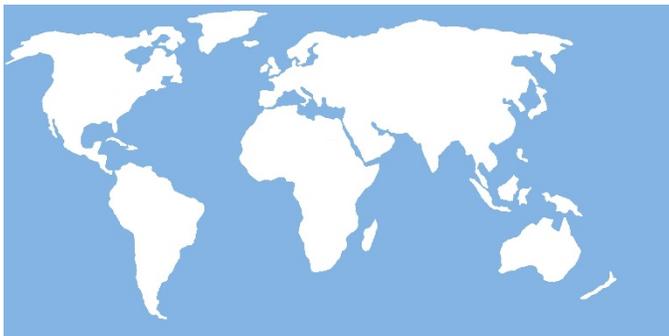
Some people are very stubborn and like to “experience” the country or city for themselves. But being lost, not knowing what you’re eating and admitting that you need help is not a bad thing!

9. Be ready to be lonely

Yes, you will make friends and meet amazing people while you are abroad. But homesickness is something that is unavoidable and much more painful than one can imagine. Family and lifelong friends are hard to replace and you need to know that there will be times where you want to go home. You are doing the right thing by seeing the world and being lonely and sad is part of the deal.

10. Embrace now, forget tomorrow

Live, love and see the world like there is no tomorrow. Don’t worry about things you have no control over. What you can control is how you spend this time. If it’s someone special you met, go for it. Nothing is worse than going home with a shopping list of what ifs.



Global Resources

Tips for a Successful Internship Abroad

<https://capaworld.capa.org/2015/01/06/10-tips-for-a-successful-internship-abroad>

Study Abroad

<https://www.studyabroad.com/>

Survival Guide for Studying Abroad

<https://www.iamexpat.nl/education/education-news/international-students-survival-guide-studying-abroad>

Global Experiences

<https://www.globalexperiences.com/>

Cultural Vistas

<https://culturalvistas.org/>

The Intern Group

<https://www.theinterngroup.com/>

Global Vistas

<https://www.gviusa.com/>

CAPA: Global Education Network

<https://www.capa.org/>

Funding Your International Internship

How to Fund your International Internship

By Lauren Plug

You’ve taken the first, and biggest, step and are thinking about an internship abroad. Good for you! This is one of the best, if not only, opportunities to travel, experience new things, new cultures, new people, and help your future career!

It seems implausible that while traveling and experiencing a new culture, you’ll be gaining valuable work experience! There is, however, a price tag; as with any good thing of value.

An internship abroad is going to be worth every penny you put into it. It is difficult enough to travel abroad on vacation, but to live and work there for several weeks, some might say is almost impossible.

Talk to Your University About Academic Credit

Believe it or not, many universities recognize the value in our program and can work with you to get internship credit.

Go speak to your academic advisor. Ask what your University requires in order to get credit for doing this internship (hour requirements, blogging, essays, supervisor sign-off). Relay info to Admissions Counselor. Go to your Financial Aid office. Tell them you’ll be getting credit and you would like to use financial aid.

Apply for Scholarships from Study Abroad Organizations

Apply to organizations that arrange study abroad, global travel, and other international experiences. These organizations are very likely to have scholarships and other funding options available.

For example, one such organization, Global Experiences, advertises their Generation Study Abroad (GSA) Scholarship and their Global Leadership Scholarship.



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Apply for External Scholarships

There are many financial aid companies and organizations that offer scholarships. Here are some sites to help get you started:

Fund for Education Abroad

<https://fundforeducationabroad.org/apply/>

Benjamin A. Gillman International Scholarship

<https://gilmanapplication.iie.org/>

International Education Financial Aid

<https://www.iefaf.org/>

College Board

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>

Diversity Abroad

<https://www.diversityabroad.com/scholarships>

Talk to Your Bank About a Loan

There are a couple of ways to approach a personal loan from the bank.

First, you do not have to request the full amount of the cost of your trip. Try saving up, asking family and friends, using financial aid, and other sources. Use all of that and what remains, request in a loan.

The two ways to apply for a bank loan:

--Signature Loan – You apply as a single or sole borrower who has a good financial history

--Co-Signed Loan – You apply in partnership with a relative who has a good financial history

Apply for an Educational Loan

You must be getting some sort of credit in order to qualify for an educational loan. An education loan is a type of financial aid that must be paid back, plus interest.

Education loans are in three major categories:

--Student Loans (Stafford and Perkins) - These are generally determined by your school once you have filed for the FAFSA. There are two types: Unsubsidized and subsidized. To qualify for both the Perkins and Stafford loan you must be

enrolled at minimum, part time and working towards a degree/certificate.

--Parent Loans (PLUS loans) - For parents wanting to help their students pay for their education and ease their financial burden. These federal loans generally have fixed interest rates and the amount of the loan is flexible.

--Private Student Loans - These are obtained through a financial institution (Credit Union or Bank). They are not funded by the government and the lending institution sets the loan terms, conditions, and interest rates. If you already have a lending institution, start by calling or going in person to discuss their process and how it works. Definitely do research and make sure you're getting the best interest rate/loan terms.

Visit the Study Abroad Office

Your Study Abroad office might be able to write you a budget for your time abroad. This should include estimated flight costs, food, and other expenses you will be responsible for. The financial aid office will use this as a guideline to reference the total amount for the loan.

If your Study Abroad office cannot help with this, go to the Financial Aid office. They will be able to help you fill out the correct paperwork and explain everything to you. You might have to create your own budget.



Other Ways to Finance

These are just a few of the main things that most of our interns do to finance their internship. Be creative. We know interns who conducted bake sales, mowed lawns, and babysat.

Here are some suggestions:

--Employment – If you are currently working, pick up a few extra shifts or work weekends.

--Crowdsourcing - get on GoFundMe, FundMyTravel, and Kickstarter to name a few.

--Sell Stuff – Sell old clothes you no longer wear. A great platform to do this is Poshmark. One intern sold over two thousand dollars worth of old clothes that she doesn't wear anymore!

--Instead of asking for birthday/holiday presents this year, ask for donations to your trip! A parent or relative that is usually generous with other items might be just as willing to donate to a meaningful experience.

--Tutoring Services – Is there something you are particularly good at that you could teach to others? Math, Science, History, English, Music? Consider offering your services as a tutor for hire.

--Baking – If you are good as baking, conduct a bake sale or offer to cater a sorority/fraternity or campus event and ask for payment or donations in return for your services.



Study Abroad Tips

Have you made the decision to study abroad but you don't know how to prepare? Use these study abroad tips to help you prepare for your trip, be safe and stay smart while traveling.

1. Register your trip abroad

This informs the local embassy of your being abroad and will help you in the event of an emergency in your home country or the country you are visiting. Be smart. Travel safely.

2. Stay a well informed world traveler

Investigate the local conditions, laws, legal system, weather, and culture of the country you're visiting. Also, keep an eye out for any Travel Warnings at the US State Department's website. Make copies of your travel documents and identification, carry a copy of each with you (separate from the originals) and leave copies at home.

3. Do your homework.

Learn about the museums, sites and landmarks in your destination before you go. Soon you'll be able to explore them all on foot and see for yourself!

4. Stick together.

Reluctant to travel overseas by yourself? Consider studying abroad with a close friend. Although study abroad is about stepping outside your comfort zone, you'll still get your share and in good (familiar) company.

5. Pack light and smart.

When packing, make sure you've checked your airline's luggage restrictions! And to save lots of room, use travel sized toiletries (you can always buy the regular sized once you get there).

6. Keep a journal.

Either you've already thought of this one or you find it cliché. But take it from us; it's a fool proof way to remember all of your adventures abroad! And it'll be fun to read through later. Or keep in touch during your trip virtually by doing regular Zoom, Team, or Skype reports.

7. Set a weekly budget.

Money spending in a foreign place can easily get out of hand with the change in currency. Be smart about your spending, and set a realistic, affordable budget for yourself to keep track and stay in control!

8. Get an International Student ID Card (ISIC).

Use it as soon as you land at the airport for commission-free foreign currency, then show it while enjoying restaurants, museums, movies and other sightseeing adventures for discounts! The best part? You can use it when you get home too because it is internationally recognized.

Good luck, stay safe, and have fun on your next unforgettable international adventure!

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