Current Trends in Study Abroad: Practical Academic Internship Models

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This presentation will explore:

I. Overview of Int’l Internships
II. Type of Internship Models
III. Academic Value of Internships
   - Selection Criteria
IV. Managing Student Expectations
V. Internship Placement Process & Challenges
Overview of International Internships

- International academic internships involve:
  - Work experience in an international setting
  - Research and reflection on the work experience
  - Academic credit
  - Can be combined with other courses that supplement the work done on the internship

- Differs from service learning
  - Internships are related to a field of study and are more career-oriented
  - Service learning is based on community service
  - There is some overlap, though

Cape Town, S. Africa
Student Benefits from Internships

• Academic Benefits
  • Connect classroom work/research with practical applications
  • Develop international expertise related to field of study
  • Improve knowledge and skills in another language (where applicable)
  • Make progress toward degree through credits earned

• Personal Benefits
  • Improve intercultural communication skills
  • Develop understanding of different cultures and communities
  • Gain self-confidence and ability to work independently
  • Ability to live and work in different settings

• Professional Benefits
  • Opportunity to combine career and international experience
  • Direct experience with chosen field
  • Enhanced resume and future employment opportunities
  • International networking opportunities
Institutional Benefits from Internships

- Diversify program options
- Attract more students to international programs
  - More men attracted by internships more practical (Lucas 2009)
  - Some majors more likely to participate than if no internship opportunities available
- Graduates more global-ready with real world international experiences
  - More competitive for job placements
  - Employers want graduates with “real world experience” with another culture (Matherly, AIFS Impact of Education Abroad on Career Development, Vol I)
- Must ensure quality of internships to get buy-in from academic units and upper administration
  - Forum on Education Abroad Standards of Good Practice
Trends in International Internships

• Consensus by all stakeholders that practical experiences are beneficial
• Growing demand for internship and other field-based experiences
• Open Doors report of 2008 shows an overall increase in participation since 1999-2000
  • Number of students participating in internships doubled from 1999-2000 to 2005-2006
  • There was a decrease from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007
  • 2009 Open Door will be released in November 2009

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• Michigan State University participation rate has gone up and down over the last few years
• In the current economic climate, I think we will see increased participation in international academic internships
Type of Academic Internships:

I. Stand Alone Internships

II. Enroll in courses before, during or after internship

III. Internship is imbedded during the study abroad program

IV. Independent internships

Thailand
3-12 credits depending on length of internship

**TYPE OF CREDIT AWARDED**

- MSU Internship credit
- MSU course credit
- MSU independent study credit
- Transfer credit (e.g. when host univ. issues transcript)
Internship Providers

• Host Foreign Universities
• Non-Profit Organizations
• Third Party Providers
• MSU Faculty Connections
• Alumni Connects
• Student find their own (independent internships- Usually James Madison or Medical school)
Academic Internships at MSU

• 25 Internship Programs (not including indep. Internships)
• 18 Countries OSA Program Internships (not including indep. Internships)
• Many other sites for Independent Internships (Ghana, Kenya, Peru, Russia)
International Internships and Academic connections

Why International Internships?

• Institutional Commitment and support for Undergraduate Education with global content

• College curriculum design/ experiential learning expectations (study abroad, civic engagement, internship and service learning)

• Student pre-professional training opportunities

• Employment/market demands
International Internships

Destination/Location Decisions

• Faculty/College connections (ongoing research, alumni connections, institutional partners)
  • Internship providers
  • Individual student interest
• Current programs:
  • Australia, Bangladesh, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, London, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand.
International Internships

Selection criteria:

• Open on-line application process
• Personal interview with college advisor, define goals, interests, expectations
• Determining “best fit” with major
• Language assessment
• Placement Interviews
International Internships

Challenges

• Maintaining program quality and academic integrity
  • (risk, health & safety, program design, assessment of student learning outcomes)

• Cost factors
  • (most popular destinations=most expensive), budget restrictions

• Timing in student academic planning
  • Junior/senior year dilemma
India
Managing Student Expectations

It is important to manage student expectations from the beginning, starting at the recruitment phase of program planning.

- Provide sample lists of previous student placements with job descriptions.
- Explain variations in sizes of available organizations and scope of responsibilities.
- Note language requirements for non-English speaking locations.
- Review current trends or placement challenges in students’ field of interest.
Managing Student Expectations

- There are limitations in types of hands-on experience students will have in some fields such as:
  - Medicine
  - Clinical Psychology
  - Law
  - Theater
- International internship placements are highly competitive. Often US students are competing with students from the country where they will be interning.
Managing Student Expectations

- Set clear guidelines on how many hours students are expected to work per week, as well as the total number of hours required to obtain credit established by university requirements.
- Interns can expect to be given basic tasks in the beginning which site supervisors will use to assess their capabilities for further responsibility and assignments.
Managing Student Expectations

- Internship Agreement
- Learning Agreement
- Internship Orientation
  - Local and Workplace Culture
  - Intercultural Communication
  - Dress Code
  - Interview Process

Internship Agreement

1. Internships are non-paying.
2. You should be aware that while CAPA will try to secure a placement within an area you specify, there is no guarantee that CAPA can find a placement that exactly meets your expectations and you may be placed in an alternate, but related area.
3. Your site is expected to provide a site supervisor who will serve as your point of contact and advise you on work related issues. It is the intern’s responsibility to maximize that opportunity by observing the practices of the workplace and asking pertinent questions.
4. The CAPA internship team is there to help you and act as a conduit between yourself and the site. You should feel free to contact the CAPA internship team for advice and assistance during office hours.
5. The precise number of hours will vary according to your program, however, all interns are required to commit to a minimum of 15 hours per week. Exact scheduling will be worked out with your site supervisor at your interview in country.
6. Completion and return of the Internship Interview Feedback Form (to the CAPA internship team) is mandatory.
7. Internships hours do not include traveling time. Expect to spend an hour commuting each way.
8. An intern is expected to demonstrate an acceptable degree of competence and initiative before being given more meaningful tasks.
9. If issues arise, it is the intern’s responsibility to initiate dialogue with their site supervisor and inform the CAPA internship team.
10. It is your site supervisor’s prerogative to make changes to your duties and assign you other tasks.
11. Interns are expected to maintain acceptable standards of dress, behavior, and respect in interaction with colleagues, supervisors and managers.
12. Interns must follow all conditions of employment at their internship site.
13. You are required to inform your supervisor at your internship site of any planned or unplanned absences or tardiness. Missed hours must be made up.
14. At the beginning of every program, there is a compulsory internship orientation.
15. Interns must attend their interview at the stated time.
16. Sites retain the right to refuse an intern on the basis of their interview. There will be no refund in this instance. CAPA will provide an alternative placement opportunity, potentially in a different area of interest.
17. In the event of an internship being terminated by the site, the internship team will assess the individual situation and act accordingly. There will be no refund. An alternative site will be provided only if the circumstance is deemed appropriate.
18. The CAPA internship team has the right to terminate an internship at any time there is evidence that the student has failed to meet his or her basic responsibilities. The decision is final and may not be appealed. Under such circumstances, the student will be removed from the CAPA program. There will be no refund.

Signatures

I have read the above conditions and agree to abide by them.

[Signature]

Date __/__/____

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Internship Placement Process

It is important to ask key questions on student internship applications to help place students in the most match their academic goals, current skills, and personal interests. These questions will also help you to further manage student internship expectations.

**Examples of fact gathering questions:**

1. Please list three desired areas of work in order of preference.
2. What courses have you completed that are relevant to your internship goals?
3. Please list three examples of employment of extracurricular involvement in which you have demonstrated responsibility and list any skills you acquired through this experience.
4. What are your future career plans and how will your internship placement choices relate to these plans?
5. What types of duties do you expect to be given?
6. Do you prefer to work independently or as part of a team?
Internship Placement Challenges

- Time frame between application deadline and program start date. Late applications for popular fields and eliminate some of the best opportunities.

- Length of the program is too short when sites have longer stay interns to choose from.

- Host culture holidays can either delay the start of the placement or disrupt the placement as companies may slow down around this time.
Internship Placement Challenges

- The company has the work but not the desk space.

- The company is so busy, they don't have the time to dedicate to an intern for training and supervision.

- A downturn in the economy can have a negative impact on internship opportunities.
  - Lack of work
  - Redundancies
  - Companies no longer in business
Internship Placement Challenges

- Change in staffing/restructuring. Previous contacts have left and we may have to build the relationship from scratch.
- Previous intern was "mediocre" and site is reluctant to take on another one.
- Big increase in the number of applications for a specific field.
- Immigration restrictions/requirements for interns in some locations.
In Country Support and Evaluation

- Weekly/Bi Weekly Internship Academic Course
- Arrival, Midterm, and Departure Student Evaluations
- Regular email communication to prompt students to address any concerns they may be experiencing at their site.
- Mid-term in person meetings between intern/academic support staff and student interns.
- Regular internship placement site visits by university/program provider internship team.
- Site supervisor evaluations
- Student Internship Portfolios
India
Thailand
Bangladesh