

How to Navigate the World of International Employment

Immersing yourself in a culture outside of your comfort zone will challenge you to grow and learn, while gaining strategies and skills that are useful for marketing yourself in other academic and professional pursuits. International volunteer efforts, internships, and fieldwork experiences are all considered relevant working opportunities.

1. Locate opportunities for international employment

- Talk to a Center for Career Development staff member.
- Use reference books in our Career Library located in Wilbur Cross, Room 201.
- Research opportunities online using Going Global, on www.huskycareerlink.uconn.edu.
- Secure proper travel documentation, housing, work location, and develop an understanding of its culture once you decide on a location.
- *Should you be looking to earn academic credit from UConn, please work with the Office of Study Abroad, located in ROWE 117.*

2. Secure documentation prior to going abroad

- Acquire a passport by following instructions on the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs website, <http://travel.state.gov/passort>.
- Plan accordingly for the approximately six-to ten-week passport processing time.
- Obtain a visa (required to visit another country for an extended period of time for work, intern, or volunteer). Visit www.travel.state.gov/visa and click on "Americans Traveling Abroad" for country specific information and entry requirements. Some countries may require specific types of visas for current students and other types for temporary workers.
- *Consider any mental or physical health issues that could impact you while abroad; make all necessary arrangements with appropriate medical personnel prior to going to another country.*

3. Know the location of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate

- Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) for free.
- Receive updated travel information and safety alerts from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- Visit the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) website, www.travel.state.gov, for updates
- *U.S. consular officers assist Americans who encounter serious legal, medical, or financial difficulties while abroad. By enrolling in STEP, it is easier for the State Department to assist you.*

4. Obtain information on international agencies

- Receive assistance in planning, placement, and accommodations for an international opportunity.
- *The range of services includes visa assistance, job or volunteer placement, housing, transportation, and on-site support upon arrival at your destination.*
- These agencies charge fees, ranging from the hundreds to thousands of dollars. Check www.internships.uconn.edu for a list of UConn Affiliated Partners.

5. Acquire information on housing opportunities

- Obtain information about housing – many employers offer housing opportunities.
- Research the geographic area to determine safe and smart living arrangements.
- Talk to the Office of Study Abroad (www.studyabroad.uconn.edu) about locations that are more student or recent graduate friendly.
- *Some of the structured, fee-based international employment programs have housing built into their programs, while others do not.*

6. Recognize that there will be **cultural adjustments**

- Pay attention to local customs; it is critical to recognize and acknowledge differences between the U.S. and other countries.
- Learn the language, try local food, and acclimate to their culture to demonstrate a willingness to adapt and show respect.
- Be humble, appreciate your surroundings, spend time with peers not from the U.S., and avoid complaining about luxuries left behind.

For those that are seeking post-graduate options of working abroad, searching for agencies using the terms, “Gap Year,” “International Post Graduate Opportunities,” or “International Volunteer After College” will help you locate agencies that specialize in finding opportunities for college graduates.

Post-graduate options differ from enrolled students’ internship opportunities

- Most often, but not always, these opportunities are in human services professions or in underdeveloped nations.
- Applicants typically pay a fee to cover basic expenses and placement; some positions are unpaid, but housing, food, and local transportation are often covered.
- Some agencies charge administrative and placement fees, so it is important to verify the organization’s legitimacy before conducting any monetary transactions: conduct reference checks, speak to trusted faculty and staff at the University who may be familiar with the organization, and thoroughly read the organization’s material.

Points to keep in mind if working for an American company

- If working for an American company abroad, you still need proper documentation (e.g., visa).
- Apply to the company directly, based on their hiring practices. These positions are very popular – as a result, they are competitive.
- You may have to work domestically for a few years before being eligible for an international assignment.

Points to keep in mind if working for an international company

- Visit Going Global on www.huskycareerlink.uconn.edu for country particulars and job opportunities.
- Be sure to follow the application process for that country specifically.
- There may be eligibility requirements for the country that could impact your ability to work in that country (e.g., sponsorship by a person of that location is required).
- Be aware that other countries may ask for information that an American company would not (e.g., age, gender, marital status).

Working for a U.S. government agency

- U.S. government agencies are an excellent resource for working abroad.
- Agencies such as the CIA or the State Department require exams and thorough background checks for employment; always be honest on applications – it is better to learn from you than from a background check.
- The ability to speak another language is an asset you should emphasize – if you have an opportunity to learn another language, take advantage of it.
- Visit www.usajobs.gov to find opportunities both in and out of the U.S. that incorporate international employment.