

# Finding an International Internship

## Student Checklist

### Introduction

Are you considering an internship outside of Canada? As a student registered in curricular Work-Integrated Learning course or program, you are eligible to work in international settings provided your internship opportunity meets the criteria of your program and broader Queen's policies for international work and travel. The following document will help you reflect on why you want to work abroad, what type of internship and living experience you are looking for, and what types of considerations you should keep in mind as you begin your international internship search.

### Why Work Abroad?

Before starting an international internship search, use the following questions to reflect on why you want to work abroad, what type of experience you're looking for, and how you'll prepare for potential immersion in a new culture:

**Question:** What types of skills am I hoping to gain by working in an international setting?

**Consider:** International experiences are often associated with adaptability, collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, identity development, intercultural skills, global perspectives, and resilience.

**Resource:** Check out the [Queen's Skills Cards](#) to assess your skill development goals.

**Question:** Do I hope to live and work in a country where I will learn from different cultural norms?

**Consider:** Future employers may value your ability to appreciate and navigate cultural differences.

**Resource:** [Considering Culture Workshop](#), Queen's University International Centre

**Source:** Adapted from University of Waterloo's International Work Opportunities webpage  
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**Question:** Does an international internship create more opportunity for me to have an impact?

**Consider:** International opportunities may expose you to new ideas, new ways of solving problems, new languages, different resources and expanded networks.

**Resources:** Work with Impact: [Queen's Career Guide to the UN SDGs](#); [Intercultural Awareness Certificate](#), Queen's University International Centre

**Question:** Am I mentally and physically ready to move to a new location where I may experience different cultural norms and language barriers in the workplace and in my day-to-day life?

**Consider:** Working and travelling abroad is an exciting opportunity but can also expose you to unexpected stresses and challenges. Labour laws and workplace accommodations can vary significantly across countries.

**Resources:** Check out this [Country Comparison](#) tool and consider checking in with Queen's [Student Wellness Services](#) or your primary care team to further explore your readiness for an international experience.

As you reflect on these questions and explore the additional resources provided, we also recommend checking in with your program coordinator or course instructor to discuss your motivations and goals for pursuing an international internship.

### **What to Consider When you are Searching for an International Internship**

Securing an international internship can take more time and effort than finding one in Canada, due to differences in employment and recruitment processes across countries. It's important to actively ensure that the opportunity aligns with the criteria for your course or program and the location will be approved by Queen's Department of Environmental Health and Safety. Use the following list to familiarize yourself with key factors to consider when seeking an international internship, and to help you make an informed decision about working abroad.

- **Length of Internship:** Make sure the position will meet the criteria for the min/max hours and time frame for your program/course; if you find an opportunity that doesn't align, consider reaching out to the employer to ask if it can be modified to meet your program's requirements.
- **Forms of Payment:** Salaries offered to interns in other countries may be lower than expected for Canada due to different employment standards or cultural norms. Ensure you get clarity about the **amount** you'll be paid as well as the **frequency, currency,**

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and **means of payment** and whether this meets your program/course requirements. Ask or investigate what types of taxes or other deductions may be associated with your salary or form of payment and consider how your earnings relate to the cost of living in the country.

- **Internship Agreements:** It should be noted that in an international context, an unpaid arrangement may require additional documentation and legal agreements. If your employer requires documentation to be signed by Queen's, please request a translated copy and submit it to your program coordinator or course instructor, who will consult with the relevant subject matter experts on campus. Note this process can take up to 4 months.
- **Internship Location:** Your safety, security, and mental health while abroad are our top priority. Queen's has institution-wide protocols that will determine if a proposed international internship is in an approved location, but you should also take time to reflect on the unique cultural, political, and socioeconomical conditions in the country you wish to work and how those might impact your desire to work in certain locations.
  - **Equity-Deserving Students and Identity Abroad:** If you are a member of one or more equity-deserving groups and/or hold intersecting identities, consider reviewing the resources posted on the [International Programs Office "Identity Abroad"](#) webpage to help you identify potential concerns around wellness and safety you had not previously considered, and help guide you in finding answers. Because your work-integrated learning course/program is not managed by the International Programs Office, if you have any questions, please contact your program coordinator or course instructor and they will connect you with the appropriate centralized and/or faculty-specific services available to you.
  - **Travel Advisories:** Queen's University complies with Government of Canada travel advisories. Queen's does not permit internships in locations with active "avoid non-essential travel" or "avoid all travel" advisories. The Government of Canada provides the most up to date potential security risks and travel advisories on their [Travel Abroad](#) website. We recommend that you review these during the internship search and keep apprised of conditions in relevant countries.

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For more detailed and localized information about the region or city where your internship might take place, the Department of Environmental Health and Safety recommends downloading the International SOS App. Instructions for how to install the App using the Queen's Membership number are found on the [Queen's Emergency Support Program SharePoint](#) page. Once in the app, Use the 'My Destinations' option to search for cities or countries.

Risk levels established by the Government of Canada will guide the approval process:

- Level 1 or 2 – normally approved.
- Level 3 or 4 are considered unmanageable risk. An activity is deemed to have an Unmanageable Risk level when sustainable mitigation strategies that would bring the risk level to a manageable threshold cannot be achieved. Normally travel in these circumstances would not be allowed.
- For international students wanting to work in their home country, with a Level 3 or 4 risk level, may petition for approval to travel.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Environmental Health and Safety ([ehssa@queensu.ca](mailto:ehssa@queensu.ca)).

- **Work Permits and/or Visas:** You may be required to obtain a work permit and/or visa to live and work in a particular country; not all individuals will be eligible to work in certain countries so be sure to inquire with the country's local consulate to determine what types of work permits or visas may be required and average wait times (be sure to have the details of your category of employment, form of pay, and total length of work and stay). You should also check with your employer if travel to any other countries will be required and if you will be eligible for any required work permits or visas for those countries. You can find the location of a consular office or embassy in Canada for the country you will be working in by visiting the [Global Affairs Canada website](#).
  - **Working in the United States:** Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and international students (except US citizens) are required to obtain a J-1 visa or authorization specifically for cultural exchange programs such as an internship. Internships in the USA can only include up to 12 months of in-person work, but additional remote work is acceptable as is not require the visa. The J-1 Visa process is facilitated by a sponsor organization. If your employer does not have

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a preferred sponsor, Cultural Vistas is a non-profit J-1 visa sponsor who offers a preferred rate for students enrolled in CEWIL (Cooperative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada) member schools, which includes Queen's University. To learn more about the CEWIL rate and process review the [Cultural Vistas "Interning in the USA?" information sheet](#).

- **Third-Party Internship Providers:** A third-party internship provider is an organization that coordinates an internship opportunity on behalf of an employer and a student. Queen's does not have formal associations with any third-party organizations.
- **Insurance Provisions:** Insurance coverage availability and procurement processes varies by international jurisdiction. It is important to verify what type and level of liability and worker's compensation insurance is provided by the internship employer. As a general rule, Commercial General Liability insurance covers bodily injury or property damage to a third-party while professional liability insurance provides coverage for professional acts which are healthcare, engineering or educational in nature during the internship. Please reach out to the insurance office for question or concerns at [insurance@queensu.ca](mailto:insurance@queensu.ca). Please note: Queen's international students taking part in academic related programs in their home country are exempt from supplementary health insurance coverage provided by the AMS or the SGPS as well as any coverage through UHIP.

## Ways to Start your International Internship Job Search

- Inquire with your personal (family, friends) and professional (faculty, past employers, colleagues, students) networks; focus on individuals who work for organizations with a global presence or who live/work in the countries or industries you're interested in
- Reach out to Queen's Alumni on LinkedIn or at a [Branch](#) in the location you are interested in
  - Set up an appointment with a [Career Coach](#) at Career Services to discuss a tailored search strategy to meet your goals. Book an appointment in [MyCareer](#).
- Search online platforms such as general job boards, specialized internship organizations and providers and company websites.

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## **Pre-Departure Requirements**

Students interning in international destinations (excluding their home country) will be required to complete:

- A High-Risk OCASP record in the Safe Travel Activity Tool (START)
- The Virtual Pre-Departure Training Modules embedded within the START for international travel before submitting the OCASP record for approval. Note: All undergraduate students travelling outside of Canada must complete the pre-departure training modules.

## **International Students – Finding an Internship in your Home Country**

All international students proposing an internship in their home country will be advised to consult with Queen's legal counsel and Queen's Department of Environmental Health and Safety to review additional liability and safety considerations when working in their country of residence.

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