

A Guide to Finding an Internship Abroad

Before embarking on your search for an international internship, note that the UNC Study Abroad Office partners with several study abroad providers to offer internship programs for credit. These programs are offered during the summer or semester. Program cost includes internship placement, visa assistance, and tuition costs for the courses you are required to take while working at your internship placement.

This guide is intended for students who want to organize an internship independently from Study Abroad. In this case, the internship would not necessarily be for credit, the student must navigate the internship search, and the student will need to work out the logistics of the internship, including, if necessary, securing a work authorization visa. This guide aims to answer the following questions:

How do I search for an internship abroad?

What should I think about as I'm searching?

Once I've found something, how do I prepare to go?

Prioritize

Decide what is most important to you for your internship experience abroad. Make a list of goals you want to accomplish while interning abroad, these can be professional, personal and academic.

- Is the organization and job duties more important than the location?
- Is there a country or city you must be in? Or will anywhere in the world be okay?
- Do you want to learn or practice a second language while interning?
- What type of company do you want to intern for? Big or small? NGO or for-profit? A start-up or an established organization? A local company or a multi-national?
- What skills do you want to develop while you are interning?
- How long are you available to intern for? How long do you *want* to intern for? How long would you like to explore and travel for?
- Must the internship be paid?
- How flexible are you with all these questions?

Timeline

In order to ensure that you have enough time to plan and prepare for an internship abroad, start your research a year early. Many different internship opportunities will have different deadlines and you will want to make sure you are aware of the timeline needed to get the internships you want.

Beginning early will also allow you enough time to complete the items discussed below.

Research

When you have an idea of where and in what industry you would like to intern, it will take a significant amount of research, time, perseverance and good fortune to secure a successful international internship. Research the work culture in the region where you want to intern. Different countries and industries may require specific and unique preparation in order to apply for an internship. For example, they might ask for a headshot, have a different style of resume/CV, or require a portfolio of work presented in a certain way. You may also find that an internship program in your area of interest may not exist in that country. It is also beneficial to research local economies and the strongest industries in that region.

Connect

One of the best ways to explore the internship possibilities in any country is to talk to people who have traveled or worked there, or who have connections in the industry you want to work in.

Talk to your major department to see if other students have previously completed internships abroad and get their contact information. Talk to faculty members who might be able to connect you with organizations abroad or assist you in your search. Talk to any industry connections you have in the US to see if they know of a company or person in the country you want to go to.

Search for UNC alumni in your destination country through LinkedIn or UNC's alumni office. Contact UNC alumni clubs around the world to ask for help or advice. Often times, if a UNC alum cares enough to keep their contact information current with the university or are willing to connect on LinkedIn, they care enough to help students find possible internships.

Connect with the Center for Global Initiatives and explore their internship database. The database has collected information from students who have completed internships abroad.

University Resources:

CGI Database

[UNC Global Alumni Clubs](#)

[University Career Services](#)

[UNC Study Abroad Office](#)

Search

If you are unable to source an internship through personal or institutional connections, there are several other options for searching for an internship abroad.

One option is using an internship placement provider. Internship providers are companies that pair up students with internships. Providers may be more expensive than other options, but you should get assistance with every aspect of planning an internship abroad, from fine-tuning your resume and finding possible placements, to securing housing and visas, to on-the-ground support and networking during your time abroad. Some providers may place you in an internship along with a study abroad program, others will provide you with just an internship for a certain period of time.

There are many internship placement providers available and they vary widely in what they offer, what they charge, the company connections they have, and the quality of service they provide. If you consider using a placement provider make sure to read all online reviews, speak with as many program alumni as you can, and be clear exactly what they are providing and how much it will cost.

If you want to intern for a large, global company they may already have a formal internship program for you to apply to. These programs can be extremely competitive and will require you to apply early.

The third option is searching internship job boards. You can find internship job boards at:

[Indeed](#)
[Idealist](#)
[Global Nomadic](#)
[LinkedIn](#)

Money

Internships you find may be paid or unpaid, they may provide housing or they may not, they might help with visa or travel or they may not. Before you accept any internship, you need to know whether you can afford it. Before you even start your internship search it is important to know what you are able to afford. Research the cost of living in different countries and cities including housing, food and travel. Estimate the amount of money you would need to live in that country if you had an unpaid internship that did not provide housing. Are you able or

willing to pay that much a month? This will help you narrow down your search for an internship.

In addition, if you are planning to use an internship placement provider, they will charge higher fees than if you organized your own internship. However, the fee may be all inclusive, so make sure you are gathering all the details.

Possible Funding Sources

Talk to your major department to see if there is any funding available for international experiences such as internships. If you are using a third-party provider they may have their own scholarships that participants can apply for. Students can also use [Embark Carolina](#) to see if they are eligible for scholarships or awards.

Apply

After you have found an internship you are interested in, you need to consider how to tailor your application materials to showcase what you have to offer. Research specific resume styles for the country you'd like to intern in and think about how you can show you are the right fit for the position. Make sure to feature past experiences and responsibilities that relate to the position you are applying for. If you have studied abroad or traveled abroad, make sure that you include this. Including international travel will show that you can adjust to living in a new environment. You can add study abroad under education, international experiences (if you have multiple) or other experiences. If you are an avid traveler you can list international travel in its own section, be sure to note if you lived or studied in the country.

Ensure you have updated any online profile or personal portfolio site such as LinkedIn, Twitter, GitHub or online website services such as SiteBuilder.com, Wix.com or SquareSpace.com.

Contact University Career Services for guidance on resumes, portfolios and developing an online presence.

Visa

Visa requirements vary widely from country to country and all students must ensure that they follow the specific rules and regulations of where they work. Some countries do not require a visa to intern there and some require a visa that you can apply for before you have a confirmed internship. Other countries have authorized specific organizations or providers as visa sponsors through which students must work. For some, the only way to secure a visa is for the company you work for to sponsor you.

No matter the visa regulations of any particular country, to intern there you must have a passport that is valid for six months past your desired return date. If it is not, you will need to renew it. You can find application instructions at the [State Department's](#) website, or apply for renewal at [UNC Global Passport Drive](#) in the fall.

Be sure that you are getting the correct information about visa requirements and which visa is right for your needs. The type of visa will depend on the country you are going to, the length of stay, if your internship is paid or unpaid, when your visa will take place and other factors. When you have secured an internship, you can talk to the company that made you an offer about visa requirements, as well as the embassy for that nation. The company will often be required to provide a letter that lists them as your work sponsor in order for you to obtain a work visa.

Some links that will be helpful when locating visa requirements:

www.embassy.org

travel.state.gov

[Going Global](#)

[BUNAC](#)

[Australia Working Holiday Visa](#)

[New Zealand Working Holiday Visa](#)

Other organizations can be found at UNC Study Abroad's ["Work, Intern, Teach, and Volunteer Abroad"](#)

International students at UNC-Chapel Hill: you must contact your nation's consulate to learn about the requirements to obtain a visa for travel outside of the United States. The UNC Office of International Student and Scholar Services can provide you with the necessary consulate and embassy locations.

Warnings

Whenever you travel, check if there are any travel or health warnings in effect that may impact your plans. The U.S. State Department monitors conditions around the world and keeps a comprehensive list of warnings and alerts. UNC [Campus Health](#) can provide more information on health issues in particular countries, can administer any vaccinations if they are needed, and can advise on health insurance abroad.

Whenever you travel abroad, ensure that you have appropriate international health insurance and travel insurance that is accepted wherever you are planning on travelling.

All UNC students are encouraged to complete the UNC Travel Registry before they go abroad. **If any students travel abroad on a UNC-connected program, the registry is mandatory.**

[US State Department – Travel Alerts and Warnings](#)

[UNC Campus Health Travel Clinic](#)

[UNC Global Registry](#)

Other Resources to help you prepare for living abroad

[Go! Orientation](#) – This orientation will help students prepare for the challenges they might face while abroad, as well help students develop intercultural competencies and engage with the community.

[Embark Carolina](#) – Provides a guide for students who wish to go abroad, as well as database to search for funding opportunities.