WORKING

by Jill N. Lacey

Australia. China. Kenya. France. Brazil. For many people, thinking about these distant lands conjures up images of speaking in foreign tongues, eating exotic foods, and listening to music that has a local flair. Different cultures have varied lifestyles that often seem more exciting or glamorous than our own. Regardless of whether our perceptions of other cultures are real, the allure of experiencing a new culture firsthand entices people to go abroad.

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ABROAD

Finding international internships and entry-level jobs

Increasingly, people seek international work to completely immerse themselves in the language and culture of their host country. Working abroad can provide many benefits, such as improving foreign language skills, networking with local employers, and developing flexibility and intercultural understanding. The skills learned abroad can be used later on the job in the United States—and may give some workers an advantage over those who do not have international experience.

But before you pack your bags, there are some issues to consider. You'll need a passport, identification, and money, of course; depending on where you're going, you might also need immunizations and travel visas. In addition, most countries require foreign workers to have a valid work visa, and the process of obtaining a visa can be difficult and time consuming.

If you want to add an international work experience to your resume, it's never too early to begin planning. Programs exist for people who are interested in a variety of careers—teaching, agriculture, business, and foreign relations, to name just a few. Many of these programs are open only to current students or recent graduates and can require a lengthy application process. You may also need some time to locate a position on your own and to save enough money to support yourself while working abroad. Carefully identifying a program and planning ahead can make working abroad personally and professionally rewarding.

This article describes some of the programs that help workers start careers in far-off places. It describes types of international work, including student internships and short-term work; U.S. Government work; teaching, agricultural, and au pair positions; and volunteer opportunities. The article also includes tips on navigating a foreign job search and preparing for and financing a trip abroad.

The benefits of working abroad

Glance through most recent headlines, and you'll see that globalization is a hot topic. The number of U.S. firms expanding abroad and the number of foreign companies operating in the United States have been growing. This global expansion of business is increasing the demand for globally minded employees.

As a result, knowledge of international business practices is becoming highly valued in job candidates. Often, the best way to learn these practices is by working abroad, even for a short time.

Professional benefits

Temporary work abroad can provide numerous benefits for people who wish to land a permanent position in the future. The Institute for International Education of Students surveyed alumni from its study abroad programs. According to those survey results, students were more likely to enter an international career if they had completed an internship while abroad. Studying in a non-English-speaking country and developing local professional contacts also increased their chances of finding international work in the future.

Working—rather than just studying—abroad helps students apply what they have learned in the classroom to the real world, boosting their qualifications and chances of landing a permanent position. Kristy Green studied in Spain during her senior year of high school, but it was her internship with a Spanish political party during college that cemented her career goals. As an international studies and business major, Green wanted to show that she could apply what she had learned. "Although I had been abroad before, I lacked international work experience," she says. "With this experience, I expect to be able to get additional internships with international responsibilities during my next 2 years of college and be above average in skill and experience when looking for a job after graduation."

Even if a permanent international position is not your goal, the skills you learn abroad can be applied to jobs in the United States. Jon Hills hopes that his experience teaching English and working for a translation company in Japan will help him find work in the Japanese financial industry. And that experience, in turn, will make him more marketable as a financial analyst in the United States. "Having a job overseas equivalent to one I would hold in the States is a worthwhile experience that will give me a huge advantage in the U.S. job market," says Hills.

Personal benefits

In addition to professional advantages, there are personal benefits gained by working abroad. Having a temporary job abroad allows you time to explore different career options or to gain new experiences. Some people decide to work abroad between college and graduate school or before beginning a new job. They hope to learn more about themselves and what types of careers they want or to rest and reflect before beginning a new phase in their lives.

Experiencing other cultures is an attraction for most people who decide to work abroad. Living in a new culture provides different perspectives and helps increase the understanding of others. And some see in international work a chance to share with others who do not have the high standard of living enjoyed in the United States.

A world of work: Options for international jobs

The first step to working abroad is to identify programs that match your interests. Programs can differ in their location, the assistance they offer, their costs, and more. So, it is important to research each program thoroughly before making substantial time and financial commitments.

When exploring programs, consider the following criteria:

- *Professional focus.* There are programs that provide opportunities in nearly all professional disciplines. These programs can provide insight into what it's really like to work in certain career fields.
- *Location of program.* Programs exist in countries on every continent. A program's location can affect your satisfaction with your experience. Usually, people choose locations based on which languages they wish to learn or which countries they wish to visit. Other considerations include the country's standard of living and climate and whether the job is located in a big city or a small village.
- *Degree of cultural immersion.* Exposure to local culture also varies among programs. Overseas interns who work for the U.S. Government usually work in embassies, mostly interacting with American workers; in contrast, au pairs live with local families and interact mostly with residents of the host country.
- *Degree of pre-trip job placement.* Some programs only issue work visas and provide minimal assistance for locating employment and housing. In these programs, you are responsible for finding your own job and accommodations. Other programs arrange specific jobs and housing, based on your interests and needs.
- *Duration of program.* Programs vary in length, from several weeks to several years.

When narrowing your list of programs, learn about the qualifications required. Most programs have age or other restrictions. Others may have coursework or professional requirements. Some programs also require a specific level of language proficiency. Nearly all require a formal application, often due months in advance. For a list of specific work programs and their contact information, see pages 19-23.

Private-sector internships and other short-term work

As the world becomes more integrated, the number of students choosing to intern abroad is growing. According to the Institute of International Education's 2005 Open Doors Survey, the number of students completing study abroad internships for college credit grew by 44 percent between 1999-2000 and 2003-04. Pursuing these internships or other international work can be a first step to starting an international career.

International internships are available in almost any industry and with any type of employer. Internships can be paid or unpaid, depending on the industry and type of visa issued, and vary in length from 1 summer to 1 year.

Organizations that partner with foreign governments grant temporary work visas to American citizens. Work visas usually are also available through foreign embassies if people have arranged an internship beforehand with an international employer. But because organizations are familiar with the visa application process, working with them can save time and frustration.

The three main options for short-term international work are study abroad internships, internship placement organizations, and student work-visa programs.

Study abroad internships. An increasing number of study abroad programs offer internships as part of their course offerings. Although these internships are usually unpaid, interns receive academic credit. For the duration of the internship, participants usually meet with an internship coordinator or mentor to discuss their work and progress.

Study abroad internships are available in many academic areas of interest and may be the easiest way to find work in the more competitive areas such as the arts, journalism, and marketing. Sometimes, applicants

for study abroad internships must have a minimum grade point average.

Usually, study abroad programs have well-established contacts with local employers and access to internships that are unavailable to general applicants. Prior to arrival in the country, the program tries to match the applicant with a local employer. Once in the country, most applicants interview for their potential internship before starting work.

Students should check with the study abroad office of their college or university to find out if they can receive academic credit for participating in a given study abroad program.

Usually, there is no separate application or participation fee for a program's internships.

Internship placement organizations. Numerous nonprofit organizations match college students or recent graduates with an international internship in their field of study. Most internships are for a semester or a year; some are paid.

Even though these internships are not formal study abroad programs, some U.S. colleges and universities grant academic credit upon completion.

Some placement organizations specialize in internships for particular career fields—engineering, business, or the sciences, for example. Most placement organizations also secure student work visas, even if the applicant did not find an internship through them.

Internship placement organizations usually charge a fee for their services.

Student work-visa programs. Many students find their own internships or jobs rather than going through a school or internship program, and part of that process is getting permission to work. Employers can often sponsor work visas if they can prove that you have knowledge and skills that local workers don't. Finding an employer willing to put forth the effort to sponsor you takes patience and perseverance, especially if you do not have previous international work experience.

But in some countries, you don't need a prearranged internship to apply for a temporary work visa and to move abroad. A few organizations specialize in arranging for work visas, leaving students on their own to find employment and housing; some of these agencies also offer help with the initial job search.

Students may choose to find employment once they arrive in their host country. This is a good option for people who have the initiative to find their own internships or for those who want to earn some spending money while they are traveling abroad. As is the case in the United States, there are many opportunities abroad for college-aged students willing to work in service jobs, such as in restaurants, resorts, or retail stores.

Temporary work visas for U.S. citizens are issued only by a handful of countries, albeit some of the more popular destinations. The duration of the visa varies by country. For example, temporary visas are offered by Australia (4-month visa), Canada (5-month visa), Ireland (4-month visa), New Zealand (12-month visa), and the United Kingdom (6-month visa). In most cases, it is possible to obtain visas for both Ireland and the United Kingdom, or Australia and New Zealand, to maximize time spent working abroad.

Temporary visas allow you to work in any paid job—except one in professional sports or entertainment—in the country of issuance for the duration of the visa. Visa holders are able to change jobs as many times as they wish before the visa expires. Generally, applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents aged 18 to 30. Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom also require applicants to be full-time college students or recent graduates who obtained their degree less than one semester prior to obtaining the visa. Contact a country's embassy to learn more about work-visa requirements.

U.S. Government foreign affairs positions

An internship or permanent position with the U.S. Government might be ideal for those who have an interest in foreign affairs or international economics and business. The Foreign Service Act of 1980 designated four official foreign affairs offices within the U.S. Government: the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service (USFCS).

These agencies promote U.S. diplomatic and commercial interests abroad and participate in international negotiations. All four agencies offer internships and permanent positions abroad for qualified U.S. citizens. The agencies also offer domestic internships in Washington, D.C., which can provide valuable insight into foreign service work.

Foreign Agricultural Service. The FAS is the international agency within the U.S. Department of Agricul-

ture. This agency administers programs that are designed to build new markets and improve the competitive position of U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace and to improve food security worldwide.

The FAS employs agricultural economists and marketing specialists in more than 90 countries. Internships are available for both college students and entry-level professionals.

- *International Agricultural Internship Program.* This program is for senior-level undergraduates or for graduate students in business, economics, international relations, law, or science-related fields. Relevant work experience and foreign language skills can make applicants more competitive. Interns complete summer or semester internships in U.S. embassies abroad. The list of available countries changes every year.

Unlike student internships in the State Department and the Commercial Service, these positions are paid. Interns often complete office tasks in addition to researching and writing reports and compiling foreign agricultural intelligence.

- *Career Intern Program.* This program is for entry-level professionals. The internships last 2 years and include four rotational assignments in Washington, D.C. Applicants should have a degree in a relevant field, such as agricultural economics; some work experience; leadership ability; and advanced communication skills.

After completing the internship, career interns are eligible for a full-time position in the FAS, and the 2-year D.C. internship qualifies them for foreign postings because it counts toward the 18 months of experience that employees must have to go abroad.

U.S. Agency for International Development. USAID provides economic development and humanitarian assistance to other nations. Examples of USAID assistance include promoting democracy, aiding in recovery from natural disasters, combating diseases and other health concerns, cleaning up the environment, and helping entrepreneurs establish small businesses. Most of the positions are in developing nations in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Eurasia, and Latin America. Most international assignments are for several years, depending on the agency's needs.

USAID offers two programs for entry-level professionals: the International Development Intern program and the New Entry Professional program. The intern program recruits recent college graduates; the professional program requires experience in development work, either abroad or in economically underserved U.S. communities. Both programs recruit people with backgrounds in financial management, economic development, contracting, or crisis, stabilization, and governance.

Prior to working in their first

foreign post, program graduates train for 6 to 24 months in Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of State. As the main foreign affairs agency of the U.S. Government, the State Department performs many functions. Major duties include developing U.S. foreign policy, negotiating treaties with other countries, providing foreign aid and assistance, issuing visas to foreign citizens who wish to come to the United States, and protecting U.S. citizens traveling abroad.

The State Department operates embassies in more than 180 countries and offers a variety of career tracks for college students and recent graduates from almost all educational disciplines, not just international studies or foreign affairs. International assignments are available for student interns and for two types of full-time workers.

- *Student internships.* Undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to apply for summer or semester internships in a U.S. embassy abroad. Interns help support the diplomatic missions of the embassies by researching topics, writing reports and briefs, helping to maintain Web sites, organizing embassy activities, arranging travel for U.S. diplomats, and performing office tasks. Most interns are not paid, although paid internships are available for applicants who can demonstrate financial need. Many embassies also provide interns with free or subsidized housing during the internship. Students may also receive academic credit.

  Internship placements are based on an embassy's personnel needs, so opportunities in a particular country may not always be available. Applicants can indicate their countries of interest and apply for internships in two different bureaus within the State Department in any given year. Only seven bureaus offer international placements, so applicants should carefully consider expressing a preference.

  Applicants must be able to obtain a secret or top secret security clearance prior to their internship. Some applicants may also need to submit to random drug tests.

  The State Department accepts interns from many different areas of study. Proficiency in the local language is not necessary, but it can give an applicant an edge in the selection process.

- *U.S. Foreign Service officers.* People who want a permanent position in foreign affairs might seek to become a Foreign Service officer. Foreign Service officers generally work as diplomats in U.S. embassies and U.S. consulates abroad. They pursue one of five career tracks: management affairs, consular affairs, economic affairs, political affairs, or public diplomacy. All five options are available to applicants with any academic background.

  Whatever their career, Foreign Service officers spend the first 2 or 3 years working as a consular officer, which usually involves conducting U.S. visa interviews of foreign citizens. Officers then move to positions in their chosen track.

  Many U.S. embassies are located in developing countries and are labeled hardship posts. Officers can expect to serve in one or more hardship posts during their first few assignments. Housing is provided by the embassy or consulate.

  To become a Foreign Service officer, applicants must pass the Foreign Service written exam, which is offered every April. U.S. citizens aged 20 to 59 are eligible to take the exam. Applicants who pass the written exam move on to an oral assessment. Those

who pass the oral assessment undergo a background investigation, a medical exam, and a final review for suitability. The names of successful candidates are placed on a rank-ordered register. Those who have proficiency in a foreign language receive additional points, which may raise their standing on the register. However, applicants are not required to be proficient in a foreign language, and language training is provided prior to a foreign assignment. As vacancies arise, those on the register are offered positions. Most of these workers can expect to attain tenure status with 5 years.

Candidates must be willing to accept a position anywhere in the world.

- *U.S. Foreign Service specialists.* Foreign Service specialists support the work of U.S. embassies and consulates but do not need to take the Foreign Service written exam. These specialists include healthcare practitioners and technicians, information technology specialists, human resources personnel, security personnel, and office and facilities managers. Like officers, specialists must pass an oral assessment, a background investigation, a medical exam, and a final review for suitability before their names are placed on a register.

U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service. The USFCS is an agency within the International Trade Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The USFCS promotes and protects U.S. businesses abroad. It helps U.S. businesses to decide where to export their goods, to develop export strategies, and to locate export financing and foreign business partners. The USFCS also develops U.S. trade policy, negotiates trade pacts with other countries, and represents U.S. commercial interests during international trade negotiations.

Internships with the USFCS are available in numerous countries. Interns usually work in the commercial section of U.S. embassies. These internships are similar to State Department internships in their job duties, duration, and application requirements. However, applicants for USFCS internships have usually studied economics or business administration. They apply directly to the Commercial Service office located in a specific country.

The USFCS also employs Commercial Service Officers, although these positions require experience. Officers need at least 2 years of qualifying experience in developing authoritative international market analyses, trade promotion activities, or trade and marketing strategies used by U.S. companies. Like State Department Foreign Service officers, Foreign Commercial Service officers must pass exams, an interview, a background check, and a medical exam before being placed on a ranked register. Officers usually work in U.S. embassies and consulates and rotate assignments every 2 to 4 years.

Teaching English as a foreign language

Teaching English abroad is one of the main avenues to finding an international position. Demand for teachers is strongest in the emerging markets of Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, but opportunities exist in most countries. Teaching positions exist in the elementary-school through university levels and can be either part time or full time.

Like instructors anywhere, English teachers working abroad are responsible for developing lesson plans, instructing multiple classes, and evaluating students. Most positions have either semester or annual contracts. Pay depends on experience, although the salary usually covers little more than living expenses. Some employment programs might also provide a housing stipend and end-of-contract airfare back to the United States.

For most jobs, a U.S. teaching license or teaching experience is not usually required. Most positions also do

not require teachers to have knowledge of the local language. In fact, most teachers study the local language on their own while teaching English.

The minimum requirements often include expert-level fluency in English and a bachelor's degree in any subject. Positions in colleges and universities might require a master's degree in teaching or linguistics.

Most employers also require completion of a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certification prior to beginning the assignment. Certification courses educate participants on the most effective methods of teaching English. Courses often include practical teaching experience in classrooms. Courses are taught online and in U.S. community colleges, universities, and private language schools. The quality of certification programs can vary, so investigate any program before you start. Some employers also accept or require other foreign language teaching credentials, such as Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificates.

Some international employment programs offer certification courses to their participants and include the cost in program fees. Programs also frequently provide a 2- to 3-week orientation in the host country to help participants assimilate into the country and learn the basics of teaching.

English teaching positions abroad are available with programs sponsored by foreign governments, with nonprofit teaching organizations, and in private language schools.

Government-sponsored programs. A few foreign governments sponsor programs for citizens of English-speaking countries to teach in their country. Participants usually need some knowledge of the local language and some interest in the host country. Compared with programs sponsored by nonprofits, government programs are more competitive. Generally, there is no application or program fee, and teaching contracts are for 1 year.

Nonprofit organizations. Numerous organizations place teachers in positions abroad. These placements usually do not require teachers to have previous experience. Positions are usually for a summer, for a semester, or for a year. Some placement organizations are country-specific; others place teachers in a variety of countries.

Many placement organizations charge program fees to cover the cost of predeparture assistance, orientation materials, and support from local contacts. Sometimes, fees also cover airfare, housing, and health insurance.

Private language schools. One way to find an English teaching position abroad is to apply directly to language schools. Schools often have recruiting offices in the United States or use U.S.-based placement agencies to fill positions. Because requirements at private language schools are rigorous, these schools prefer to hire people who already have some experience teaching English. Many job openings for teaching positions in private language schools are advertised online.

Opportunities for licensed teachers

Opportunities abound for qualified teachers to work abroad. Teaching positions abroad, and their qualification requirements, are similar to those for equivalent U.S. teaching slots. To obtain these international teaching positions, applicants usually need a valid U.S. teaching license and several years of teaching experience. Teaching contracts are usually full time and last 1 to 2 years.

Teachers of all subjects and grade levels can find international opportunities. The four main sources of international work for experienced teachers are the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program, nonprofit organizations, private international schools, and the U.S. Department of Defense schools.

Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program. This exchange program, administered by the U.S. Department of State, allows a one-for-one exchange between an American and a foreign teacher. The two teachers are partnered by subject area and level of instruction. They each teach for 1 year in the partner's school. Teachers also usually swap housing or assist their partner in locating alternative housing. The teachers' home school districts continue to pay their salary and benefits.

The program is open to all educators—including special education teachers, administrators, school counselors, and librarians—who have at least 3 years of teaching experience. However, opportunities in various subjects are not always available in every participating country. Every year, about 30 countries take part in the exchange, with country participants changing every year.

Nonprofit organizations. Some nonprofit organizations recruit qualified teachers of all subjects and grade levels for placement throughout the world. In addition, some nonprofits recruit and place education administrators and university professors. Along with teaching classes, participants may help develop a new curriculum for the school or train local teachers in their area of expertise.

Private international schools. These are English-speaking schools that instruct the children of diplomats, missionaries, foreign-aid workers, businesspeople, and other expatriates. Because there are American expatriates all over the world, opportunities to teach in these schools exist in almost every country. Compensation usually includes housing and moving expenses.

Competition for openings in these schools can be intense. Most positions require some international experience, knowledge of a foreign language, and at least 2 years of teaching experience. Job-seekers often go through recruiting agencies that place teachers in foreign countries. These agencies usually screen applicants and refer the best qualified ones to schools. Some international schools recruit directly at U.S. job fairs for teachers.

U.S. Department of Defense schools. The Department of Defense Education Activity operates primary and secondary schools for the dependents of military personnel stationed throughout the world. Currently, there are schools in 13 countries and the U.S. territories of Guam and Puerto Rico.

Most teachers receive housing on the military bases or stipends for local accommodations. Because teachers instruct American students on the bases, contact with locals might be limited. Applicants for these jobs are not usually required to have skill in a foreign language.

Agricultural exchange programs

For young adults interested in an agriculture career, a foreign agricultural exchange program can give perspective on agricultural methods used in other countries. Programs are available in numerous disciplines, including animal, dairy, and crop farming; horticulture; turf management; equine studies; and enology.

Typical duties of agricultural exchange participants include planting and harvesting crops, operating machinery, fertilizing crops, identifying and eradicating diseases

and pests, performing basic veterinary duties, training and grooming animals, and marketing and selling farm products.

Most agricultural exchange programs are in Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and Western Europe and last from 4 months to a year or more. In some cases, participants might be able to extend their experience abroad by working in two countries. Participants usually live with their host families on their farms or near the vineyard, greenhouse, or orchard in which they work. If participants do not live with the host family, they are provided an allowance for housing. Most participants also receive a small stipend for their work and receive time off for holidays.

For most programs, applicants must be between the ages of 18 and 30 and have previous work experience in agriculture.

A few nonprofit exchange programs arrange placements, for a fee. These programs also arrange for work visas, transportation, and orientation materials.

Au pair placement programs

Many young men and women choose to work abroad as au pairs. Au pairs work in private homes, providing childcare and performing basic housework. Most au pair opportunities are in Europe and South America. Employment contracts can last from a few months to a few years.

Because au pairs live with a host family and communicate mainly in the local language, this is among the best ways to become fluent in another language. Working as an au pair can also be a valuable experience for those who plan to have a career in childcare, teaching, counseling, or psychology.

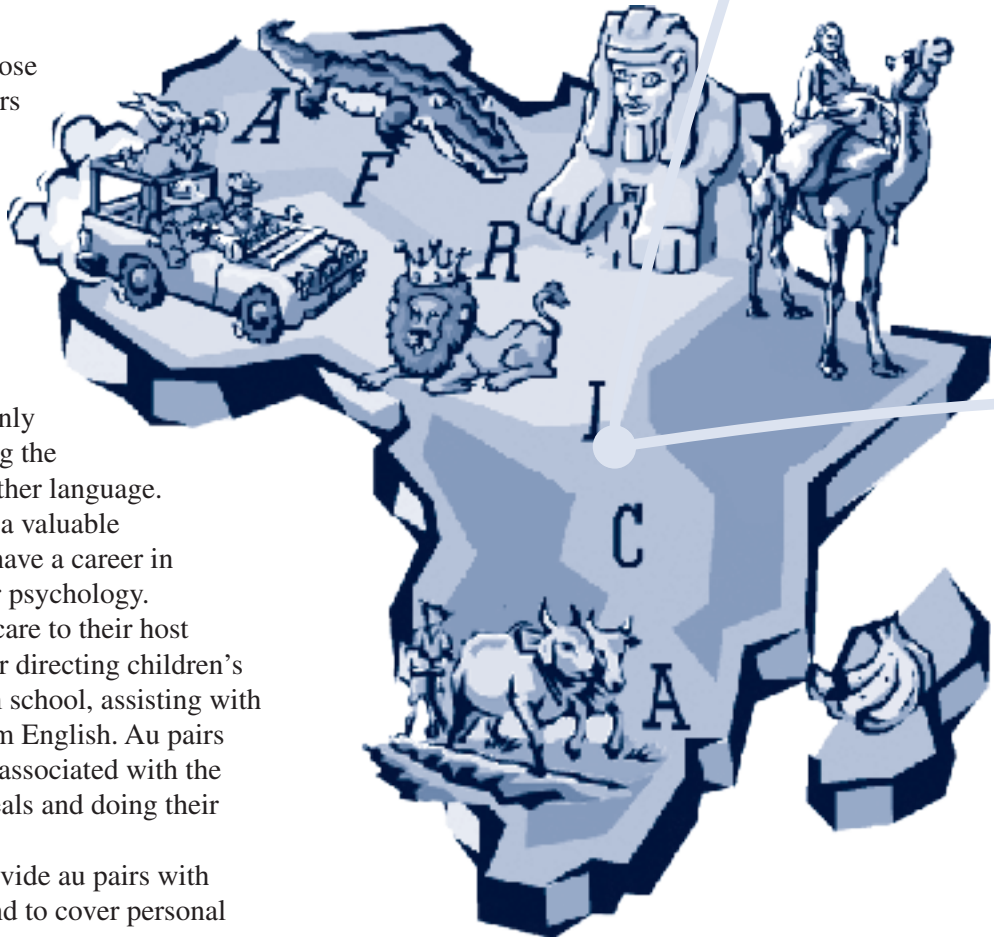
Au pairs provide live-in childcare to their host families and can be responsible for directing children's activities, taking them to and from school, assisting with their homework, and teaching them English. Au pairs usually perform household duties associated with the children, such as cooking their meals and doing their laundry.

In exchange, host families provide au pairs with room and board and a small stipend to cover personal expenses. Au pairs usually receive 1 or 2 days off per week, in addition to national holidays.

Most au pairs must be between the ages of 18 and 30 to qualify for placement. Most also need experience supervising children; this experience may come from working as a babysitter, a sports coach, a lifeguard, or a camp counselor. Some agencies also perform background checks on applicants and require applicants to have an international driver's license.

Au pairs usually find employment through a reputable placement agency. The International Au Pair Association accredits agencies that maintain strict screening processes for both au pairs and host families. These agencies provide detailed work contracts that outline the compensation, duration of the assignment, number of work hours expected, and number of days off per week.

Reputable agencies also offer to place the au pair with a new family if the first placement does not work out. Agencies will also arrange work visas, assist with



transportation, and provide orientation materials about the host country. Most agencies charge a registration fee for finding placements.

Experts caution against au pairs placing their own advertisements or answering employment ads not placed by reputable agencies. Without proper screening of families, it can be difficult to know the quality of the working environment before you arrive. And once in the country, it can be difficult to find other employment or to get out of an undesirable situation.

International volunteer opportunities

Volunteer opportunities can provide useful work-related skills, such as leadership. Many of these opportunities are in developing nations throughout the world. Volunteering abroad provides especially useful experience for future teachers, social workers, healthcare personnel, and construction trade workers. Volunteer projects that relate to a course of study may be awarded academic credit by the student's college or university.

Like other opportunities abroad, volunteering abroad can also provide personal benefits. Many of these programs are only a few weeks long, allowing participants to gauge their willingness to stay abroad longer. Most volunteer programs last a few weeks or months during the summer. Others last for a semester, a year, or more than a year.

Almost all volunteer programs include housing and meals. But because many organizations operate on limited budgets, some require international volunteers to cover the costs of participating abroad.

Volunteers can participate in opportunities abroad through agencies or groups such as the Peace Corps, placement organizations, and those that arrange for participation in projects on vacations or in work camps.

Peace Corps. Peace Corps volunteers spend 2 years abroad in a developing country. Most work in the areas of healthcare, education, and business. (Detailed information about the Peace Corps is available in a fall 2000 *Quarterly* article, "Job Corps, AmeriCorps, and Peace Corps: An overview," online at **www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2000/Fall/art03.pdf**.)

Volunteer placement organizations. These organizations arrange personalized volunteer placements based on the volunteers' interests and levels of experience.

Volunteer vacations. These vacations combine volunteer projects with sightseeing excursions. Vacations vary in both duration and the amount of time spent volunteering. Several of the world's largest nonprofit organizations allow volunteers to participate in international projects.

Work camps. These camps consist of between 15 and 20 volunteers, mostly students, who work primarily during the summer on construction or social-work projects. Some work camps are established through religious-based organizations.

Finding—and landing—far-off jobs

A formal application is required for most of the positions described in this article. For student internships and volunteer programs, this application is often like a college one. Students might be required to submit transcripts, essays, recommendations, an application fee, and a resume or its foreign equivalent, the curriculum vitae.

Finding your own work, rather than applying to a program, can add extra adventure to a trip abroad. But it takes cultural savvy to locate openings, write job applications, and interview for positions in another country.

Searching for jobs on your own

As mentioned previously, you will need a visa before starting work abroad. Where available, temporary student work visas allow you to accept paid work during a specified time. Or specific employers can apply for a visa for you, if you arrange for that beforehand.

Finding your own internship allows you to focus on industries and employers of your choice, which could be rewarding for your future career. However, finding your own employment can be time consuming.

Starting the job search before you go abroad, instead of waiting until you are there, has several benefits. For one thing, the search can be more focused and thorough. For another, you will be able to spend more time actually working when you arrive in your host country. And waiting until landing abroad to find a job can drain your bank account as you live off savings until securing your first job—and that first paycheck.

Some aspects of finding a job abroad are similar to finding one in the United States. Begin by locating interesting positions; then, apply. Locate open positions using some or all of the following sources: employment agencies, networking, and online job postings.

Employment agencies. Employment agencies are a good source of job openings because most of them have

connections to employers. In some countries, agencies are the main portal to finding employment, especially for entry-level positions.

Some agencies specialize in particular industries or skill levels; others place workers in a variety of positions. Agencies try to match employees with potential employers based on the participant's job interests, skills, and education.

Chris Young discovered the benefits of using an employment agency when he was looking for jobs in London. He posted his resume on some U.K. job sites but did not get any replies. But then, some local employment agencies located his resume online and contacted him about their services. "Once I found out that agencies were the main way people found jobs, I registered with three agencies," he says, "and within a week, I had two interviews." Young had one or two interviews each week for about 2 months before accepting a position.

Most employment agencies have Web sites. Many also list their services in local newspapers and in online resume banks. Registering with multiple agencies might increase your chances of finding a job.

The agency should work hard to find you a suitable position. At a minimum, an agency representative should remember your name and career objectives every time you interact with him or her. If the agency does not meet your expectations, do not hesitate to find another one. Some agencies might charge a placement fee for their services.

Networking. In addition to family members and friends who might have international connections, your college's study abroad office might have lists of open positions or of alumni and former interns who could put you in touch with potential employers. Professors also might have connections abroad.

After you arrive in your host country, you will discover that many large cities have networking groups for Americans. If you share an apartment with local residents, you may also be able to ask them to provide job leads. The offices for most visa programs also provide employment listings.

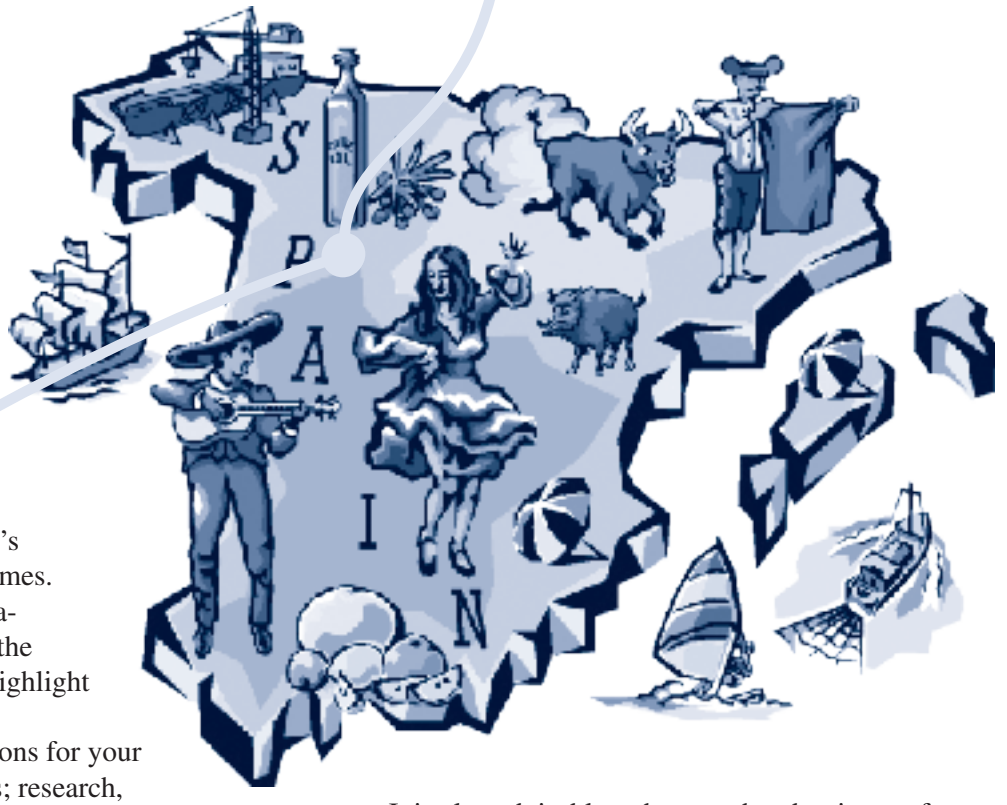
Online job postings. Many international newspapers provide online job listings in their city. Most online job banks also include international job listings.

Writing a curriculum vitae

If you are applying for international jobs, you may need to submit a curriculum vitae (CV) instead of a resume. A CV is similar to a resume in that it outlines your professional qualifications and history, but it does so with more detail. You can turn an updated resume into a CV by adding some information and expanding the descriptions of your educational and professional experiences.

Generally, entry-level resumes are one page or less in length; CVs are usually two pages. A CV begins with a list of your contact information, followed by a personal information section, which usually includes your date and place of birth, country of citizenship, visa status, sex, marital status, and number of dependents. Also included in a CV is a section on personal activities and interests, information that usually is not included on a U.S. resume unless it specifically relates to your career.

CVs also include a personal introduction section



summarizing key skills and experiences related to the job. When applying for jobs prior to departure abroad, be sure to mention the work visa you will hold; also, tell employers the date you will arrive and the date you will be able to begin work.

The next two sections of a CV describe education and job experience. The job experience section usually lists each job's employer, key projects, and outcomes. CVs show this information in paragraph format, which differs from the bulleted points on a resume that highlight responsibilities and outcomes.

CVs also should include sections for your honors, awards, and achievements; research, publications, and presentations; and technical and language skills, along with levels of proficiency. Although a resume might include some of this information if it is related to the job, a CV includes details for each of your awards, publications, and projects. Also, CVs usually list your references and their contact information.

In some countries, preferences determine which information is included in which order on the CV, so research your prospective host country's preferences in one of the many published guides available. Some employers might also ask you to translate your CV into the local language.

Finally, most employers expect a CV to be accompanied by a cover letter, commonly referred to outside the United States as a "letter of interest" or a "motivation letter." The information in these letters is similar to what you would send a U.S. employer in a cover letter.

Interviewing

As with most jobs, you will usually need to interview for the international positions you seek. Depending on the country and type of job, the interview might be conducted in the local language.

Prepare for the interview just as you would for an interview in the United States: Research the organization, know your strengths, and express why you want the job. Arrive on time and dress professionally for all interviews, even for service-related positions, such as those in restaurants. It is also advisable to have on hand written references from former bosses, coworkers, or professors that positively attest to your qualifications and work ethic.

On other matters of etiquette, some common U.S. interview practices are not followed in other countries. For example, directly looking your interviewer in the eye or following up with a telephone call or a thank-you note might be seen as too aggressive in some cultures. Before interviewing for any jobs in another country, research the prospective host country's cultural and business practices so you can make a good first impression. Books and online guides about cultural differences can help.

Next steps

After you find a job, you will need to consider the practicalities of preparing for a trip abroad and of finding a way to pay for it.

Getting ready to go

When you accept an organization's work placement, you usually need to pay part or all of the program fee to hold your place in the program. Program fees vary by organization. But before you send a check, be sure to thoroughly research the organization's cancellation and refund policies in case you are unable to participate. Some organizations return the entire fee; others offer partial refunds. The refund amount might decline as your departure date draws nearer.

If you are arranging your own flight, make sure your visa has been issued before purchasing a plane ticket in order to avoid flight cancellation or change fees.

Most programs also require proof of health insurance that includes coverage for medical evacuation to the United States, if necessary. If you do not have suitable insurance, the program may require you to purchase its policy before going abroad.

Vaccinations may be required before you go abroad, especially if you are going to a developing country. Vaccines usually are administered 4 to 6 weeks before departure.

If housing is not provided, it is a good idea to arrange a place to stay for at least the first few nights before you depart. This will ensure you have a roof over your head while you acclimate to your new surroundings and look for a permanent residence.

Finding the funds

Working abroad can be an expensive venture, even if you find a paying job. Most programs advise that you choose to go abroad for the experience, rather than for earning money to save. Salaries for entry-level workers are often just enough to cover living expenses.

In many countries, employers usually pay salaries only once a month, so you need to plan ahead. A rule of thumb is to make sure you have enough money to cover your living expenses for several months.

As part of your preparations for going abroad, research the cost of living in the places that interest you. Then, save accordingly. Most programs give you an estimate of how much money you should take with you. Some programs even require that you take a minimum amount to cover expenses. For example, the British Universities of North America work-visa program requires participants to bring a minimum of $2,000 to work in the United Kingdom.

Some programs require participants to pay fees of several thousand dollars. What these fees cover varies by program. A portion of the program fees paid to nonprofit organizations is tax deductible.

If you are participating in an internship that is part of a study abroad program, you might be able to apply scholarships and financial aid toward your experience. Check with your school's financial aid office for eligibility rules.

Other sources of scholarship or alternative funding may be available. For example, community and religious organizations might provide scholarships or grants to students going abroad. Some of these funds are targeted toward students studying a particular subject or language or in a particular country. Local chambers of commerce often list organizations that offer funding.

Finally, for those interested in teaching or volunteering abroad, especially in developing nations, fundraising may be a viable option. People might contribute toward your participation fees if they believe you will provide a needed service.

Would they work abroad again?

The best source of advice on what it's really like to work abroad is other Americans who have done it. Consider contacting former participants in your chosen program to learn about their experiences and to garner advice. The majority will probably tell you that they would do it all over again, if given the opportunity. They might tell you that their experiences were not what they expected but that they returned to the United States better prepared for their future.

Keeping an open mind is important, as is learning to adapt to a new culture. Most people who have been abroad agree that the experience increased their confidence in their ability to overcome adversity.

Most also agree that integrating yourself into another culture is personally rewarding. Green says that during her internship, she felt she was living the life of a Spaniard—and got an ego boost when locals thought she was Spanish. "I picked up the local accent and colloquialisms," she says, "and most people I talked to were surprised when I told them I'm American. They thought I grew up there, and there's no better feeling than that!"

Living in another culture can also make you aware of your misconceptions. Being a foreigner in Japan is sometimes difficult for Hills, who says that being an outsider becomes your identity whether you like it or not. "Everything is more difficult in a foreign language," he says. "Whenever I go out, there are usually two to three people staring at me because I am different." Because of his experiences, Hills has resolved to be more patient and sympathetic to foreigners he meets in the United States.

Going abroad also allows you to build lifelong relationships with the people you meet. Patricia Tate taught at an elementary school in Ghana while conducting research for her master's thesis. She still keeps in touch with her students and is organizing a drive to send books to her former students. "After being overseas, I appreciate what we have in the United States a lot more," she says. "I feel that I am able to give something back by helping the children in Ghana. I would not have traded this experience for anything in the world."

For more information

Many Internet and library resources have information about how to find international internships, scholarships, and financial aid; how to write CVs and cover letters; and how to conduct business in various cultures.

In addition to the programs listed in the directory on pages 19-23, the following organizations can provide information on where to find jobs, internships, and volunteer programs.

An online resource—including a list of available opportunities—provides information on interning or volunteering with international nonprofit organizations and is available from:

Action Without Borders
360 W. 31st St., Suite 1510
New York, NY 10001
(212) 843-3973
www.idealist.org

For a list of study abroad programs that offer internships, contact:

Institute of International Education
IIEPassport Study Abroad Directories
1350 Edgmont Ave., Suite 1100
Chester, PA 19013
Toll-free: 1 (877) 4040-EDU (404-0338)
www.iiepassport.org
www.studyabroad.com/internabroad

For a list of international au pair agencies, contact:

International Au Pair Association
Bredgade 25H
1260 Copenhagen K
Denmark
(45) 3317 0066
www.iapa.org

For a list of international volunteer opportunities, contact:

Foundation for Sustainable Development
870 Market St., Suite 321
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 283-4873
www.fsdinternational.org

For information about international volunteer and work opportunities for people with disabilities, contact:

Mobility International USA
132 East Broadway, Suite 343
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 343-1284 (Tel/TTY)
www.miusa.org

For information about opportunities with the Peace Corps, contact:

Peace Corps
Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters
1111 20th St. NW.
Washington, DC 20526
Toll-free: 1 (800) 424-8580
www.peacecorps.gov

For information about teaching English as a second language and related training programs, contact:

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.
700 S. Washington St., Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
Toll-free: 1 (888) 547-3369
www.tesol.org

For information about international jobs with the Federal Government, use the Office of Personnel Management's employment information system, USAJOBS. Call the automated telephone system at (703) 724-1850, TDD (978) 461-8404. These numbers are not toll-free. You may also visit online at **www.usajobs.opm.gov**.

Directory of international exchange programs

The following table lists many nonprofit and government work abroad programs. This list does not contain information for programs from private companies or religious organizations or for programs that have a duration time of less than 3 months.

Before applying to any program, be sure to thoroughly research the organization and contact former participants. Also contact the Better Business Bureau to find out if there have been formal complaints made against the organization.

Organization	Geographic area	Foreign language proficiency required?	Paid positions available?	Application and program fees[1]	Program description
Private-sector internships and other short-term work					
Internship placement organizations					
American-Scandinavian Foundation Scandinavia House 58 Park Ave. New York, NY 10016 (212) 879-9779 **www.amscan.org/training.html**	Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden	No	Yes	$	Open positions are listed on the Web site. Program also arranges work visas for students who have arranged internships.
CDS International 871 United Nations Plaza New York, NY 10017 (212) 497-3500 **www.cdsintl.org**	Argentina, Germany, Russia, Spain, Switzerland	Yes	Yes	$$ to $$$	Operates several internship placement programs and fellowships. Also provides temporary work visas for participants who have arranged internships in Germany and Switzerland.
Cross-Cultural Solutions 2 Clinton Pl. New Rochelle, NY 10801 Toll-free: 1 (800) 380-4777 **www.crossculturalsolutions.org**	Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Peru, Russia, Tanzania, Thailand	No	No	$$$$	Internships in healthcare, education, and social services are available for academic credit.
Foundation for Sustainable Development 870 Market St., Suite 321 San Francisco, CA 94102 (415) 283-4873 **www.fsdinternational.org**	Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Nicaragua, Peru, Uganda	Varies	No	$$$$	Nonprofit internships available in community and economic development, education, environment, health, and human rights.
InterExchange 161 Sixth Ave. New York, NY 10013 (212) 924-0446 **www.interexchange.org**	Costa Rica, France, Great Britain	Yes	No	$$$$	Arranges internships for students based on the participant's experience.
International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience 10400 Little Patuxent Parkway Suite 250 Columbia, MD 21044 (410) 997-3069 **www.iaesteunitedstates.org**	80 countries	No	Yes	$$ to $$$	Arranges internships in architecture, computer science, engineering, and the natural and physical sciences. Also arranges work visas for students who have prearranged internships in any field of study.
International Association of Students in Economics and Business (AIESEC) 127 W. 26th St., 10th Floor New York, NY 10001 (212) 757-3774 **www.aiesecus.org**	90 countries	Varies	Yes	$$$	Arranges internships in business, engineering, and IT; also arranges work visas for AIESEC members.

Organization	Geographic area	Foreign language proficiency required?	Paid positions available?	Application and program fees[1]	Program description
International Foundation for Education & Self-Help International Fellows Program 5040 E. Shea Blvd., Suite 260 Scottsdale, AZ 85254-4687 (480) 443-1800 **www.ifesh.org**	Sub-Saharan Africa	Varies	Yes	$	Places recent college graduates and graduate students in internships with international development organizations.
Internships International P.O. Box 480 23 Reed Rd. Woolwich, ME 04579 (207) 442-7942 **www.internshipsinternational.org**	17 countries	Varies	No	$$$$	Arranges internships for college seniors and recent graduates in most areas of study, including pre-medicine.
JET Program Coordinators of International Relations Embassy of Japan JET Program Office 2520 Massachusetts Ave. NW. Washington, DC 20008 (202) 238-6772 ext. 6773 **www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JETProgram/homepage.html**	Japan	Yes	Yes	$	Participants work with local Japanese organizations involved in international exchange activities. Might include some English teaching.
Princeton in Asia Bobst Center for Peace and Justice 83 Prospect Ave., Room 202 Princeton, NJ 08544 (609) 258-9318 **www.princeton.edu/~pia**	15 countries in Asia	No	Yes	$$	Fellowships in education, journalism, nongovernment organizations, and business. Immersion experiences available.
Student work-visa programs					
Association for International Practical Training Americans Abroad Program 10400 Little Patuxent Parkway Suite 250 Columbia, MD 21044 (410) 997-2200 **www.aipt.org**	France, Switzerland	Yes	Yes	$$	Arranges work visas for students who have internships set up.
British Universities North America Club P.O. Box 430 Southbury, CT 06488 Toll-free: 1 (800) GO-BUNAC (462-8622) **www.bunac.org**	Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom	No	Yes	$$ to $$$	Arranges work visas for students. Participants do not have to prearrange job or internship before departure.
French-American Chamber of Commerce 122 E. 42nd St., Suite 2015 New York, NY 10168 (212) 867-3603 **www.faccnyc.org**	France	Yes	Yes	$$	Arranges 3- to 18-month work visas for Americans with prearranged internships.
U.S. Government foreign affairs positions					
U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Human Resources Personnel Operations Division Room 208 Ronald Reagan Bldg. Washington, DC 20523-2808 **www.usaid.gov/careers**	Worldwide	Yes	Yes	$	Foreign service opportunities exist for entry-level candidates and professionals with previous technical experience.

Organization	Geographic area	Foreign language proficiency required?	Paid positions available?	Application and program fees[1]	Program description
U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service 1400 Independence Ave. SW. Washington, DC 20250 **www.fas.usda.gov/admin/newjobs/newjobs.html**	Worldwide	Yes	Yes	$	College seniors or graduate students can intern abroad. Permanent employees may also apply for foreign service after 18 months of full-time employment.
U.S. Department of Commerce U.S. Commercial Service 1401 Constitution Ave. NW. Washington, DC 20230 **http://export.gov/comm_svc/employment/employment_main.html**	Worldwide	Yes	Yes	$	Students can intern in the commercial sections of U.S. embassies. Permanent opportunities also exist for those who pass written and oral exams.
U.S. Department of State HR/REE/REC 2401 E St. NW., Suite 518 H Washington, DC 20522 **www.careers.state.gov**	Worldwide	Yes	Yes	$	Student internships available in U.S. embassies abroad. Permanent foreign service officer and specialist positions available.
Teaching English as a foreign language					
Government-sponsored programs					
Cultural Services of the French Embassy of the U.S. English Teaching Assistant Program 4101 Reservoir Rd. Washington, DC 20007 **www.frenchculture.org/education**	France	Yes	Yes	[2]	Participants teach 12 hours of English per week in primary and secondary schools throughout the country.
English Program in Korea Center for In-Service Education Korea National University of Education Cheongwon, Chungbuk, 363-791, South Korea (82) 43-233-4516 **http://epik.knue.ac.kr**	South Korea	No	Yes	$	Participants teach English to Korean teachers and students in schools and training centers.
JET Program Assistant Language Teacher Embassy of Japan JET Program Office 2520 Massachusetts Ave. NW. Washington, DC 20008 (202) 238-6772 ext. 6773 **www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JETProgram/homepage.html**	Japan	No	Yes	$	Assistant teachers help teach English in public elementary and primary schools and participate in local international exchange activities.
Nonprofit organizations					
American-Scandinavian Foundation Scandinavia House 58 Park Ave. New York, NY 10016 (212) 879- 9779 **www.amscan.org/training.html**	Finland	No	Yes	$	Recent graduates and college students majoring in education or TOEFL teach English in grade schools and colleges.
Appalachians Abroad Teach in China Center for International Programs One John Marshall Dr. Huntington, WV 25755 (304) 696-6265 **www.marshall.edu/gochina**	China	No	Yes	$$$$	Participants teach English to students in grades 1 through 12 or in universities. Participants may also teach subject areas in science and liberal arts if teaching at international schools.

Organization	Geographic area	Foreign language proficiency required?	Paid positions available?	Application and program fees[1]	Program description
Colorado China Council 4556 Apple Way Boulder, CO 80301 (303) 443-1108 **www.asiacouncil.org**	China	No	Yes	$$$$	Participants teach English at universities. Some participants also teach literature, history, business, economics, or law.
Council on International Exchange 7 Custom House St., 3rd Floor Portland, ME 04101 Toll-free: 1 (800) 407-8839 **www.ciee.org/teach.aspx**	Chile, China, Spain, Thailand	Varies	Yes	$$$$	Participants teach between 16 and 22 English classes per week in grade schools and some universities.
Princeton in Asia Bobst Center for Peace and Justice 83 Prospect Ave., Room 202 Princeton, NJ 08544 (609) 258-9318 **www.princeton.edu/~pia**	15 countries in Asia	No	Yes	$$	Teaching fellowships available at all levels. Some countries offer teaching positions in subjects other than English.
WorldTeach c/o Center for International Development Harvard University 79 John F. Kennedy St. Cambridge, MA 02138 Toll-free: 1 (800) 483-2240 **www.worldteach.org**	Chile, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Marshall Islands, Namibia, Pohnpei, Poland, South Africa	No	No	$$$$	Participants teach English in local schools in developing countries. Some participants might also teach math, science, computer skills, or health awareness.
Opportunities for licensed teachers					
Fulbright teaching programs					
Austrian-American Educational Commission Fulbright Commission Schmidgasse 14 A-1080, Vienna, Austria (43) 1 313 39 ext. 5685 **www.fulbright.at/us_citizens/teaching_intro.php**	Austria	Yes	Yes	$$	Participants help English teachers for 12 hours per week in secondary schools.
Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program 600 Maryland Ave. SW., Suite 320 Washington, DC 20024 (202) 314-3527 **www.fulbrightexchanges.org**	30 countries	Varies	Yes	$	Full-time teachers and administrators participate in a one-for-one exchange with teachers or administrators in a foreign country. The levels and subjects taught depend on the needs of specific countries.
Nonprofit organizations					
Global Student Teaching English Language Teaching Assistant Program 225 Community Services Bldg. University of Minnesota-Morris Morris, MN 56267 (320) 589-6406 **www.globalst.org**	48 countries	No	No	$$$$	Arranges teaching assistantships in international schools for U.S. students majoring in education. Course credit may be obtained.
The International Foundation for Education & Self-Help Teachers for Africa 5040 E. Shea Blvd., Suite 260 Scottsdale, AZ 85254-4687 (480) 443-1800 **www.ifesh.org**	Sub-Saharan Africa	Varies	Yes	$	Places accredited teachers, administrators, and college professors in sub-Saharan African schools.

Organization	Geographic area	Foreign language proficiency required?	Paid positions available?	Application and program fees[1]	Program description
Private international schools					
International Schools Service 15 Roszel Rd., P.O. Box 5910 Princeton, NJ 08543 (609) 452-0990 **www.iss.edu**	Worldwide	No	Yes	$$	Maintains a database of candidates and sponsors several recruitment fairs annually for teachers wishing to work in an American international school.
U.S. Department of Defense					
Department of Defense Education Activity 4040 N. Fairfax Dr. Arlington, VA 22203 (703) 588-3983 **www.dodea.edu**	13 countries	No	Yes	$	Hires elementary and secondary school teachers on military bases. Also offers unpaid jobs for student teachers.
Agricultural exchange programs					
Communicating for Agriculture Exchange Program 112 E. Lincoln Ave. P.O. Box 677 Fergus Falls, MN 56538 Toll-free: 1 (800) 432-3276 **www.caepinc.com**	Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Western Europe	No	Yes	[2]	Participants with prior experience can work in agriculture, enology, equine care, horticulture, and turf management.
Experience International P.O. Box 680 Everson, WA 98247 (360) 966-3876 **www.expint.org**	35 countries	Varies	Yes	$$	Participants with prior experience can work in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, horticulture, and natural resources management.
International Agricultural Exchange Association Agriventure Program #105, 7710-5 St. SE. Calgary, Alberta T2H 2L9 Canada (403) 255-7799 **www.agriventure.com**	Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden	[2]	Yes	[2]	Participants with prior experience can work in agriculture, horticulture, or home management.
Au pair placement programs					
InterExchange 161 Sixth Ave. New York, NY 10013 (212) 924-0446 **www.interexchange.org**	France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain	Varies	Yes	$$ to $$$	Arranges placements and is a member of the International Au Pair Association.

[1] Fee ranges are as follows: $ ($0 to $99), $$ ($100 to $499), $$$ ($500 to $999), and $$$$ ($1,000 or higher).

[2] Information not available. Contact the organization for details.