

A Starter's Guide To Work Abroad

This guide is a research tool and jumping off point for getting started in your search for work in a foreign country following graduation. If you're looking for information on working or interning abroad while a current student, check out: <http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad/internships-abroad-521.htm>

First, What Do You Want?

Types of work abroad range from volunteer work with housing provided to professional positions complete with a salary and relocation package. Therefore, before starting your search, you will want to think deeply about your goals in pursuing work abroad. Some beginning questions to consider:

- For how long are you looking to be gone?
 - A summer? 2 years? The length of commitment you're seeking can help to narrow down your options.
- Do you need to make a lot of money?
 - If not, volunteering or short-term work abroad may get you the experience for which you are looking.
- What types of skills are you hoping to gain?
 - Are you hoping to gain intercultural and people skills? Maybe teaching is the way to go.
 - Are you instead hoping to work in a position that aligns well with your career? Then it may make more sense to seek out a position at a global company.
- Are you looking for a way to meet new people and experience a new culture?
 - Perhaps working in the tourism industry is your best bet.
- Are you seeking work that will allow you to make a difference in the lives of people around the world?
 - Programs like the Peace Corps could be an excellent way to do work that directly affects the lives of others.

Types of Work Abroad

Below are brief descriptions of some of the most common types of work abroad options.

- Peace Corps
 - The Peace Corps is a volunteer program run by the US government that places individuals in over 70 different countries. Volunteers work on various projects from education to health to environment, just to name a few. These assignments are generally 2 years in length, and although technically unpaid, volunteers receive many benefits.
 - For more information, see: <http://www.peacecorps.gov/>.
- Military or Foreign Service
 - Many Americans are placed on assignment in foreign countries through their roles in the US military. To learn more about military service, and the opportunities for being placed abroad, check out: <http://www.military.com/join-armed-forces>.
 - The US government employs thousands of Americans who work in hundreds of countries around the world, for more information start at: <http://careers.state.gov/officer>.

Types of Work Abroad (Cont.)

- Professional Opportunities
 - In most cases, the best way to find a professional position in a foreign country is to do so through a company located in the US that also has a global presence. Many large corporations provide short and long term opportunities for their employees to get experience abroad.
 - It is also possible to apply directly to positions in a foreign country. However, this will be significantly more difficult since there are many work permit and visa requirements which can impede a company from hiring you. In many countries it will also be necessary to demonstrate a high level of proficiency in the host country's primary language.
 - For more information on job postings, check out the *Where to Begin Your Search* section below.
- Teaching English
 - Many countries around the world, in which English is not an official language, offer programs for native English speakers to teach in their schools. These programs are usually one to two years in length and require that applicants have a college degree.
 - A good place to start looking for available positions is through the US Embassy website for the particular country in which you are interested.
 - For further reading on this topic, check out this book: <http://www.nomadicmatt.com/travel-tips/teach-english-around-the-world/>.
- Tourism Industry
 - Many countries around the world host millions of tourists each year. The tourism industry, often seasonal, could provide various work opportunities for foreigners.
 - A couple of examples of work in the tourism industry:
 - If you have a special skill, for example as a trained diving instructor, you may be able to leverage that skill to find work at a resort.
 - Working as a tour guide is another option, this article describes the ins and outs of being a guide abroad: <http://matadornetwork.com/notebook/tour-guide-the-right-job-for-you/>

Where to Begin Your Search

Below is a list of job search websites you can use to find positions and more information about working abroad.

- GoinGlobal provides country-specific career information, including a job search database: <http://www.gvsu.edu/careers/goingglobal-84.htm>
- The U.S. Department of State offers a webpage with information on working abroad: <http://www.state.gov/m/psi/tc/79765.htm>.
- Transitions Abroad is a comprehensive website with articles, job postings, and general advice in searching for work abroad: <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/>.
- British Universities North American Club offers work and internship exchange programs for US citizens: <http://www.bunac.org/usa>.
- Easy Expat offers blogs, guides, job listings, and other resources for learning about and finding work abroad: <http://www.easyexpat.com/>.
- Go Abroad provides a job posting database of positions and programs around the world: <http://jobs.goabroad.com/>.

Best Practices For Finding Work Abroad

- Spread the word.
 - It is never too early to begin telling everyone you know that you are looking for work abroad. This is the first step in networking with a purpose.
- Build language skills.
 - Work in a foreign country will often require that you know the host language. However, even if it is not required, knowing the host language will surely enhance your experience in that country.
- Talk to experts.
 - Find people who have worked abroad before. These individuals will have first hand knowledge about how they got their positions abroad, and they can be invaluable sources of information for you as you begin the search process.
- Be a savvy researcher.
 - Use your resources wisely. The best researchers will gather information from multiple sources. Get organized as you research the opportunities that may suit you best. Simply browsing websites for hours on end can lead to nowhere. Instead, keep track of what you learn and what you need to investigate further. Keep moving forward.

Help On Campus

Feeling the need to talk through your options and strategize next steps with someone on campus? Do not hesitate to make an appointment with an advisor in the Career Center. Advisors are available from 9am-5pm Monday through Friday. You can make an appointment by calling 616-331-3311.