

Note: This document is not intended for students on work term/Co-operative Education/practicum placements.

This document aims to assist Canadian Mount Royal University students considering working internationally. Before you venture abroad, there are many things to consider, including:

- What are the benefits of working abroad?
- How early should you begin your research and job search?
- What types of work opportunities exist?
- Are internships or international work experiences paid opportunities?
- Where can you work?
- What resources are available to help you get started?

Identify personal objectives and benefits

Adding an international work opportunity to your university summer break or after graduation can be a rewarding experience. There are few better ways to broaden horizons, learn about yourself, and become a part of the global community. Not only will you learn from the work experience, you will also benefit from the cultural experience. Not all international work experiences are dramatically life changing, but any opportunity to learn more about the world by living and working in a new place and getting to know another culture is a good start.

Start getting organized

Organizing an international work experience can be a complex and time-consuming process. Allow yourself a minimum of **six months to a year** to properly research your options and adequately prepare for a successful experience.

In addition to informing key University contacts and making contact with potential international employers, you must become aware of the process and fulfill relevant immigration and University documentation requirements (i.e., work visas, travel documentation, acknowledgement of responsibility and liability) within appropriate deadlines.

See *Page 4* for a timeline overview.

Complete a self evaluation

Evaluate if you are honestly ready for this experience. What is right for you, and what would you like to achieve?

Working internationally is not for everyone. Once you begin your research, you may find the number of job possibilities around the world overwhelming, so it helps to have a sense of what you would like to do.

Start with some self-analysis to determine what type of opportunity is best for you. It's also important to sort out your expectations. Is this purely an opportunity to travel and experience another culture? How important is the salary? Often it's a process of elimination – where do you not want to go, and what do you not want to do? Ask yourself, "What is my ideal work abroad experience? What would I really like to do and where?"

Questions to consider:

- How adventurous are you?
- What are your interests?
- How well can you adapt to new situations?
- Can you be organized if you need to be?
- Where would you like to go – and for how long?
- What experience or professional qualifications do you have? What skills can you offer an employer?
- What are your career goals?
- Are you aware that many international internships and work opportunities are unpaid?
- Do you speak more than one language?
- Are you hoping to develop or improve your language skills?
- Do you have any health concerns that would limit your ability to travel or require special insurance?
- Have you travelled before? What did you learn from the experience? What would you do differently?

Do some brainstorming

List all of your options. These might include volunteer positions, internships, and summer jobs. Contact people you know who may be able to help you with your search. Gather preliminary information about the options on your list, then refine your list to the most likely options and continue to gather more detailed information. Consider things like language requirements, travel costs, health, regulations, visa requirements, accommodations and living arrangements. Cultivate your knowledge of world affairs and the country in which you plan to live.

Tip: Use the Career and Employment Tip Sheet *Strategic Volunteering* available in Career Services (A200).

Select and evaluate the organization

Before selecting an employment opportunity, ensure the organization is of high quality and fits with your expectations and needs. Choose a well-known organization that clearly advertises its function. It should define the hazards – as well as the advantages – of working abroad. Many organizations are private enterprises and are not officially connected with government, education or cultural exchange programs.

Consider contacting the following:

- The professional association in your field (see the Directory of Business and Trade Associations/Organizations)
- The Canadian Embassy – write to the Commercial Section in your host country and request a list of Canadian companies registered
- The Canadian Chamber of Commerce – request a list of Canadian companies involved in business in your host country and ask for a list of events where you can network and meet new people
- A Career Development Coordinator in Career Services to discuss your strategies

Compile information on the organization

- How did you learn about the organization or opportunity? Was it from a reliable source?
- What verified facts do you know about the organization you are considering?
- What other information is available? Brochures? Information sessions?
- Can you ask former interns about their experiences?
- Is the Canadian government familiar with the organization?
- How is the organization funded? (CIDA, other government, private, or religious)

Review responsibilities and benefits

- What are working conditions like?
- Does the organization take steps to ensure a safe working and living environment? Does the company have a formal/written policy around occupational health and safety practices?
- Who will take responsibility if some aspect of your work is done incorrectly – you or the organization?
- Is there a Canadian office or branch that would be subject to Canadian laws?
- Who is responsible if complications arise and legal action is necessary?
- Inquire about work permit regulations. If you work, are there tax options?
- Will accommodation be provided or will you have to find it yourself?
- What kind of health care is available in the host country? Is health insurance available? If so, who pays? What is covered?
- Are long-term disability and life insurance available?
- Will you be returned home at the organization's expense should you become seriously ill or die?
- Will you be returned home at the organization's expense should there be a family emergency?

Create an international resume

There is no one standard format for an international resume. Familiarize yourself with the standards of your target country. Does the recipient use British or American English? Potential employers unfamiliar with your Canadian variation may assume your resume contains errors.

Have someone from the country in question review your resume to ensure it is easily understood and culturally correct. In North America, providing personal information may be considered unprofessional, but in other countries **it may be a standard requirement**. Find out if your resume should include a personal section, photograph, or other information to avoid being passed over.

All Mount Royal students have free access to **My World Abroad**. To create an international resume, go to the section under Top Resources titled *Your International Resume and LinkedIn Profile*. Login with your Mount Royal email address at myworldabroad.com/mtroial and explore this resource.

Determine where you can work

Travel Reports are available for every country in the world and include information on security and safety, health and entry requirements, and contact numbers for Canadian government offices abroad.

If unstable conditions exist in a country, the travel report advises Canadians to avoid travel to the country or a particular region of the country, and/or to leave. Current advice for specific countries is subject to change. The fact

that a country does not appear on the list does not mean there isn't any risk.

The Canadian Government does not recommend travelling to and working in countries with travel advisory warnings. If the country you intend to visit has travel advisory warnings, you should reconsider your travel plans.

Always check country visa requirements. Also, keep in mind that international internships may be unpaid because of difficulties associated in attaining work visas.

Use professional job search links and resources

Government of Canada – Global Affairs Canada

- International Experience Canada – www.canada.ca/iec
- Centre for Intercultural Learning – <http://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/index.aspx?lang=eng>
- Embassies and Consulates – <http://travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates>
- Working Abroad – <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/living-abroad/working>
 - Working Abroad publications – <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications>
- Travel Advice and Advisories – <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>

Mount Royal University

- Career Services – Gain International Experience
<http://www.mtroyal.ca/EmploymentCareers/CareerServices/Students/internationalex.htm>
- International Education (EB3021) – Access to international opportunities, news and events
<http://www.mtroyal.ca/ProgramsCourses/FacultiesSchoolsCentres/InternationalEducation/index.htm>
- My World Abroad – Expert advice for students considering going abroad to study, volunteer, intern, teach, travel or work. A subscription to My World Abroad has been provided by International Education for all MRU students and graduates; login at no charge with your Mount Royal email address at <http://myworldabroad.com>
- AIESEC – International Association for Students in Economics and Commercial Sciences. Professional internships and volunteer abroad programs; opportunities to live and work in a foreign country in areas of management, technology, education, and development. Contact your Mount Royal AIESEC chapter at info.aiesecmru@gmail.com

Other helpful websites

- University of Alberta – Go Abroad – <https://www.ualberta.ca/international/go-abroad/programs>
- Transitions Abroad – Web portal for work, study and travel abroad – <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/>

DISCLAIMER

This is not a legal document. Check the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Global Affairs Canada sites regularly for updates.

This document was produced to assist students studying at Mount Royal University. Career Services cannot be responsible for any errors or omissions. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all required international conditions and paperwork are met based on the regulations outlined by the Government of Canada and the international work abroad policies of the government and country in which the student applies to work.

Set timelines

Six to eight months prior to departure

- Meet with Career Services to discuss options and access resources to help you research international opportunities
- Create an international resume
- Make an appointment with your physician and/or a Travel Health Clinic to determine and/or receive the required inoculations for the countries you will be visiting
- Review links and literature regarding preparations to work abroad www.mtroyal.ca/EmploymentCareers/CareerServices/Students/internationalex.htm
- Complete a budget worksheet to help you prepare. How much it will cost to travel, to live and work in the host country? Do you have adequate funds?
- Make sure you have a valid passport (valid for at least six months after your return date)

Three months prior to departure

- Obtain work visa from host country's consulate/embassy here in Canada
- Arrange appropriate health insurance. One option is "Guard Me." If you have questions, contact International Education
- Arrange travel to the host country and forward a copy of your itinerary to International Education
- Connect with the employer to negotiate and confirm employment details in writing
- Ensure you understand all information in the contract **before** signing. If you have questions or would like to propose changes, do so before signing your contract. If your employer is not open to providing answers, consider suspending the process
- Do not travel to the country of your prospective job if you do not have an updated signed contract from the prospective employer that reflects the final agreement

Two months prior to departure

- Speak to your financial institution to determine the best ways to transfer funds to the host country and to travel with money (e.g. traveller's cheques, bank card, credit card). Confirm your debit card PIN and address any other money-related questions
- Read more about the host country – keep an eye on the news
- Obtain a travel guide for the host country and any other countries you intend to visit
- Confirm accommodation arrangements
- Consider purchasing an International Student ID Card (ISIC), www.isiccanada.ca, receive various student discounts

One month prior to departure

- Exchange \$300 - \$500 CAD into foreign currency and/or traveller's cheques
- Make two photocopies of your passport, visa, traveller's cheques and credit cards – provide a copy to a responsible family member or friend in case these documents are lost or stolen while you are abroad. Keep a copy with you as well, but keep separately from the original documents
- Check the Government of Canada travel advisories for the most recent information on the host country, and register with Global Affairs Canada before you leave
- Ensure you have completed all necessary paperwork and requirements for your employment

Final checklist

- Visa (appropriate type; verify travel and/or work)
- Work permit
- Canadian Embassy in host country (address, contact information)
- Employer contact information (company name, address, contact person(s), direct supervisor, human resource contact, telephone number with area code, fax, email)
- Pre-employment agreement:
 - Job requirements and conditions
 - Length of contract and conditions for extension
 - Type of compensation, benefits, insurance and taxes
- Vacation, holidays and sick leave
- Terms to terminate contract prematurely
- Living conditions (location, type, costs)
- Language issues (dictionary, language converter)
- Finances (spending money upon arrival – taxi/bus, return ticket, emergency money)

Upon arrival in the host country

- Check in with your employer
- Ensure you know where to go for medical assistance, banking, and general assistance
- Contact family and friends at home
- Contact Global Affairs Canada to confirm you have arrived

While working abroad

- Keep a journal, check in regularly with family and friends and inform them of changes to your employment, travel plans and accommodations

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