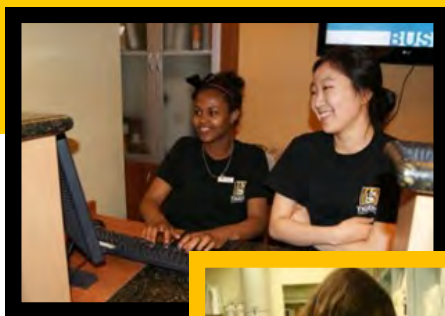




Asian Affairs Center
University of Missouri

Hosting AAC Interns



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Table of Contents

Interns at a Glance	3
The Benefits of Hosting an Intern	4
The Benefits that an Intern Receives	5
FAQs	6
Communication Tips	10
East vs. West (cultural similarities and differences)	12
Comments from Previous Hosts	14



(An EPI intern doing a professional presentation for the staff at his internship site)



Interns at a Glance

Who are the volunteer interns?

The Asian Affairs Center (AAC) hosts Asian students from Pacific Rim countries, and they are typically upper class college students who come to the University of Missouri to improve their English and experience American culture. The students are bright young people with generally good English skills and have been chosen by their university based on a highly selective set of criteria. They are interested in gaining exposure to American work places, and are not paid for these internships.

When do they come and for how long are they here?

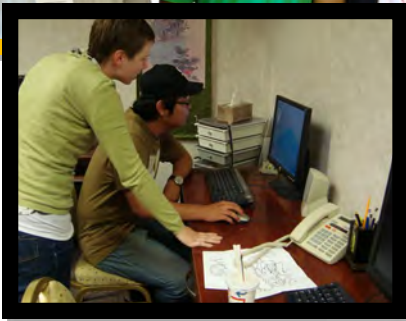
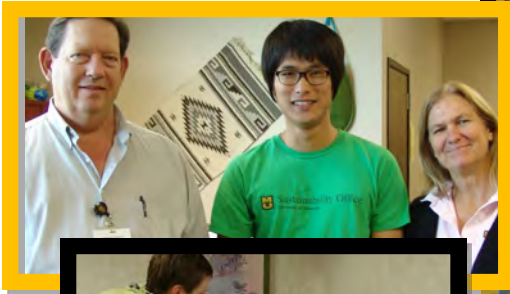
We have short- and long-term placements. If you are working with a **short-term** volunteer, they would be working with you 2 days a week for 4-5 weeks.

If you are working with a **longer-term** volunteer intern, they would be working with you 4 days a week for 3 months during the semester (either spring or fall). On occasion, these longer-term internships can be split between 2 placement sites.



You and your colleagues will:

- Receive volunteer assistance in your work place.
- Deepen your understanding of another culture.
- Network with other internship hosts through Asian Affairs Center events.
- Impact the life of a visiting university student in a very real and valuable way.
- Build a more culturally diverse workplace through the integration of an AAC intern.
- Increase your community and campus visibility through AAC publications and features.
- Enrich your workplace through cross-cultural sharing and business practices.



Benefits

The students will gain:

- Exposure to an American work environment to increase their readiness for work in today's global market.
- Greater confidence in professional interactions – especially while using English.
- Increased knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses in a professional setting.
- Insight into future career goals and opportunities.
- Professional contacts and friends in their work



places.

- Increased opportunities to interact on a regular basis with various people in your workplace to practice professional English conversation skills.
- Opportunities to work in a team environment.
- Positive interactions in American work places.
- Encouragement through accomplishment in a real-life work place.
- Deeper understanding of similarities and differences between Asian and American work practices.



What does the Asian Affairs hope to accomplish through these placements?

While we take care to place the students at a site that will match their interests, this does not necessarily mean their major field of study. Our hope is that this experience will provide them with a positive environment in which to hone their social skills so that they are better able to work with different people, environments, and language.

Among the varied experiences the Asian Affairs Center attempts to provide, one is the opportunity to work in and observe a workplace. Unpaid internships are arranged with local businesses, campus departments and non-profit organizations. The students are committed to working hard, but a primary purpose is to put them in a situation of working and communicating with fellow workers and patrons or clients in order to deepen their knowledge of American business culture. They thrive in situations where they can ask questions and receive feedback.



Do the internships need to be near the MU campus or where they are living?

No. The students live on campus, so they will either walk to their worksites, or the Asian Affairs Center staff will drive them.

Do the students speak English well?

In most cases, yes. Although the students are continuing their learning process, all students have undergone a telephone interview and have met the program's requirement for English competency. We feel confident that they can function well in their internship experi-



ence.

What is an ideal work environment?

The goal of the internship portion of our programs is to find workplace settings that ideally meet all of the following criteria:

1. Expose students to an American work environment
2. Provide the students opportunities to interact on a regular basis with various people in that workplace (in some cases this might be clients, colleagues or both)



3. Help the students gain insight about some of their strengths and weaknesses
4. Give the students the chance to work in a team environment
5. Meet the professional or personal interest areas of the students
6. Encourage the students to communicate in English on a regular basis in the workplace
7. Instill confidence in the student.
8. Expose students to a variety of American work environments, including both individual tasks and team-centered work.



What tasks can an intern perform?

Our goal is to have the interns placed in situations that contribute to their understanding of American business culture – both in dealing with clients or customers as well as working with colleagues.

Appropriate tasks include:

- Any job that is performed by the staff at your place of business.
- Job shadowing activities, especially at the beginning of the internship, to better understand your work site.
- Sitting in on meetings and observing the decision-making process in American work places.
- Any project that contributes to the success of your business or office. Interns love being able to contribute in a meaningful way to their worksite.
- The interns are NOT permitted to drive during their stay in Columbia, even with an international permit.

“Interaction is key.” Being able to interact regularly with their American supervisors, colleagues, customers, and clients is what excites the interns the most—and it is what allows the interns to reach their primary goal of learning about American work culture and practicing their professional English. Please note that some individual work is OK, especially if they have the ability to ask questions of their supervisors or colleagues. The best situation is if they get to see and do a variety of jobs over the course of their internship.

What is expected of the supervisor of the intern?

There’s not much in the way of paperwork or meetings that we ask of our internship sites. We will, however, ask you to complete a simple evaluation form to verify the days that the student worked at your location for the student to show their home university at the end of the program. The program coordinator will also check in periodically to see how things are going.

Before your student comes to work, we will invite you to a lunch where you can meet them personally before they begin work. We find that this is an excellent time to ease the anxiety the student might be feeling about going to a work place in a foreign country, and it is a wonderful time for you to meet them and get to know them



FAQs

a little outside of the work setting. You will also be invited to attend their final presentation and graduation ceremony. (If you are not able to attend these events, we ask that you send a colleague who also works closely with your intern. For the students, the presence of their supervisor or co-worker at the luncheon—and graduation—is especially important.)

What is expected of workplace environment?

- A “work station” for the intern—preferably not isolated from the rest of the staff.
- Co-workers who welcome the student and include them in office communication and activities.



What else should I know?

The students are curious and friendly and will ask questions about how and why Americans do things in certain ways. They also are very open to telling you about Korean life and culture as they have experienced it. Organizations that have hosted interns in the past have found them delightful and helpful. We believe you and your employees will feel they have gained as much as they have given the students during their time in your place of business.



How to Communicate with a Non-Native English Speaker

Not all non-native speakers have trouble communicating in English. Many speak at a native level, but many do not. The ability to communicate with people who speak a limited amount of English is actually a skill that can be developed over time with practice. Whether you deal with non-native English speakers often or rarely, this advice will help you to communicate more effectively and smoothly.

1. Speak clearly and pronounce your words correctly. Exaggerated pronunciations will not help your listener and may cause more confusion.
2. Recognize that people wrongly think that turning up the volume somehow creates instant understanding. Avoid this common mistake (but also, do not speak too quietly).
3. Do not cover or hide your mouth because listeners will want to watch you as you pronounce your words. This helps them figure out what you are saying in many cases.
4. Do not use baby talk or incorrect English. This does not make you easier to understand. It will confuse your listener and may give the wrong impression about your own level of competence.
5. Avoid running words together (Do-ya wanna eat-a-pizza?). One of the biggest challenges for listeners is knowing where one word ends and the next one begins. Give them a small pause between words if they seem to be struggling.
6. When possible, opt for simple words instead of ones that are complex. The more basic a word is, the better the chance is that it will be understood. ("Big" is a better choice than "enormous" for example. "Make" is a better choice than "manufacture.")



Communication Tips

7. As much as possible, avoid using filler and colloquialisms ('um...', 'like...', 'Yeah, totally.') as non-native speakers, especially ones of lower proficiency levels, may get hung up on these thinking the filler language is vocabulary that they don't possess. Well, especially if they are not easy to find in the dictionary.
8. If asked to repeat something, first repeat it as you said it the first time. Then again. It could be that they simply didn't hear you. If your listener still doesn't understand, however, change a few key words in the sentence.
9. Consider the fact that your dialect may not be what the other person has learned in school. For example, most non-Americans expect the second t in the word "twenty" to be pronounced.
10. Avoid using contractions or short forms. Use long forms. "Can't" is one word you must use the long form with. It is difficult for a non-native speaker to understand the difference between "can" and "can't" in a sentence. For example, "I can't take you on Friday" and "I can take you on Friday". Use the long form, "cannot". "I cannot take you on Friday".
11. Be explicit: Say "Yes" or "No". Do not say: "Uh-huh" or "Uh-uh". Those words are not in grammar books.
12. Be patient and smile. The more relaxed you are, the more you are in control of your communication.



EAST

- Silence is valued
- Knowing is emphasized
- Interrupting is generally not OK
- Asking a question to supervisor might embarrass him/her because it implies that he/she didn't explain well
- Non-verbal communication is important
- Indirect communication can be considered most polite and often helps to "save face"
- "Opinions don't necessarily need to be shared"
- Expect honest answer after asking several times
- No eye contact can show respect
- Greetings are for friends and known people
- Group
- Rest (or being) is valued



East vs. West General Trends

WEST

- Silence is “to be filled”
- Clarify with words. Communication is emphasized. Check for meaning, “Oh, do you mean...”
- Interruption is OK at appropriate times
- “There is no such thing as a dumb question.” Questions are perfectly OK and preferred (“We like interaction!”)
- Verbal interaction and words are important
- Direct communication can be considered most polite and often helps to “save face”
- “I want to know your opinion!”
- Expect honest answer after asking once
- Eye contact can show respect
- Greetings are for anyone and everyone
- Individual
- Action (or doing) is valued



Do you think that your intern's personality, knowledge, background, and interests were a good match for your worksite? Why or why not?

"Yes, it was a good match... It was clear that she liked to learn, liked challenges, and her happy personality was enjoyed by everyone in the office, even those with whom she did not have task-related contact."

-Judy Todd, Nonresident Alien Taxation Office, MU

"Yes, our intern was very interested in the students' English learning and language improvement. Her open-minded and positive attitude created a strong bond between the students and herself."

-Jinju Lee, ELL Instructor

What was the most rewarding moment working with your intern?

"The joy of learning about the student's home and country. Being able to engage a young person as they broaden their skills is very enjoyable."

- June Gibson, Office of the Vice Provost for International Programs, MU

"It is so cool to see the intern grow not only in learning their job but in their communication skills and understanding/experiencing the American culture. We shared so many stories about our lives and comparing our outside work activities."

- Sarah Lee, Mizzou Rec Complex

"The most rewarding experience was when Olive conducted her first transaction solo. She was so proud and showed the receipt to everyone!"

-Laura Royse, Tigers Credit Union



Comments from Hosts

Would you recommend your colleagues to host an international student intern?

“Absolutely. These are wonderful young people who are eager and willing to learn new things. They want to contribute to your office and interact with you and your staff. They are so grateful that you are taking the time to work with them and giving them this opportunity.”

- *Becky Brandt, International Admissions Office, MU*

“Absolutely Yes. For starters, I felt it was a great learning experience for both myself and my intern, and I would bet most students and supervisors feel the same way. ‘Creating community’ is our Parks Department motto, and working with international students is a great way to connect with a part of the Columbia community we might otherwise miss.”

- *Brett O’Brien, Columbia Park Natural Resources Supervisor*

“Definitely. It was a great experience getting to know another culture and really helped with the workload as well.”

- *Cyndi Lemmon, 4-H Center for Youth Development, MU Extension*

“Absolutely, and I have! The organization of the program is top-notch, and so are the students. In my field, it is especially helpful to share cultural information. This has assisted me both in the classroom and in life. It is an enriching experience for the interns AND their supervisors. I feel fortunate to have been a part of this program for years and I hope to have placements in the future.”

- *Carla Hurtado, ELL teacher, Columbia Public Schools*



Asian Affairs Center
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