

INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS: CAPSTONES TO A GLOBAL EDUCATION

Re-entry: Helping Interns Integrate an International Experience into the Rest of Their Lives

Handouts:

- Top Ten Re-entry Challenges
- Top Five Tips for Returning
- Possible Outcomes of an International Experience
- Life –Long Learning After Study Abroad
- Future Pathways Beyond International Internships
- Re-Entry Shock: Common Problems and Possible Solutions
- Career Track Tips

Session facilitated by:

Tanya Ulsted, former Re-entry Coordinator GTF, OSU

Ten Top Immediate Reentry Challenges **As rated by university students** **Dr. Bruce La Brack**

There are lots of reasons to look forward to going home, but there are also a number of psychological, social and cultural aspects which can prove difficult – often because they are unanticipated. The following list was generated by interviewing students like you who have been through the experience and survived nicely. However, they say you should take the process seriously by being realistic and thinking about it and your possible reactions. They offer the following thoughts on reentry for your consideration in the hope they will make your return both more enjoyable and more productive.

1. Boredom

After all the newness and stimulation of your time abroad, a return to family, friends, and old routines (however nice and comforting) can seem very dull. It is natural to miss the excitement and challenges which characterize study in a foreign country, but it is up to you to find ways to overcome such negative reactions – remember a bored person is also boring.

2. “No One Wants To Hear”

One thing you can count on upon your return: no one will be as interested in hearing about your adventures and triumphs as you will be in sharing those experiences. This is not a rejection of you or your achievements, but simply the fact that once they have heard the highlights, any further interest on your audiences’ part is probably unlikely. Be realistic in your expectations of how fascinating your journey is going to be for everyone else. Be brief.

3. You Can’t Explain

Even when given a chance to explain all the sights you saw and feelings you had while studying abroad, it is likely to be at least a bit frustrating to relay them coherently. It is very difficult to convey this kind of experience to people who do not have similar frames of reference or travel backgrounds, no matter how sympathetic they are as listeners. You can tell people about your trip, but you may fail to make them understand exactly how or why you felt a particular way. It’s okay.

4. Reverse “Homesickness”

Just as you probably missed home for a time after arriving overseas, it is just as natural to experience some reverse homesickness for the people, places, and things that you grew accustomed to as a student overseas. To an extent it can be reduced by writing letters, telephoning, and generally keeping in contact, but feelings of loss are an integral part of international sojourns and must be anticipated and accepted as a natural result of study abroad.

5. Relationships Have Changed

It is inevitable that when you return you will notice that some relationships with friends and family will have changed. Just as you have altered some of your ideas and attitudes while abroad, the people at home are likely to have experienced some changes. These changes may be positive or negative, but expecting that no change will have occurred is unrealistic. The best preparation is flexibility, openness, minimal preconceptions, and tempered optimism.

6. People See “Wrong” Changes

Sometimes people may concentrate on small alterations in your behavior or ideas and seem threatened or upset by them. Others may ascribe “bad” traits to the influence of your time abroad. These incidents may be motivated by jealousy, fear, or feelings of superiority or inferiority. To avoid or minimize them it is necessary to monitor yourself and be aware of the reactions of those around you, especially in the first few weeks following your return. This phase normally passes quickly if you do nothing to confirm their stereotypes.

7. People Misunderstand

A few people will misinterpret your words or actions in such a way that communication is difficult. For example, what you may have come to think of as humor (particularly sarcasm, banter, etc.) and ways to show affection or establish conversation may not be seen as wit, but aggression or “showing off.” Conversely, a silence that was seen as simply polite overseas might be interpreted at home, incorrectly, as signaling agreement or opposition. New clothing styles or mannerisms may be viewed as provocative, inappropriate, or as an affectation. Continually using references to foreign places or sprinkling foreign language expressions or words into an English conversation is often considered boasting. Be aware of how you may look to others and how your behavior is likely to be interpreted.

8. Feelings Of Alienation

Sometimes the reality of being back “home” is not as natural or enjoyable as the place you had constructed as your mental image. When real daily life is less enjoyable or more demanding than you remembered, it is natural to feel some alienation. Many returnees develop “critical eyes”, a tendency to see faults in the society you never noticed before. Some even become quite critical of everyone and everything for a time.

This is no different than when you first left home. Mental comparisons are fine, but keep them to yourself until you regain both your cultural balance and a balanced perspective.

9. Inability To Apply New Knowledge And Skills

Many returnees are frustrated by the lack of opportunity to apply newly gained social, technical, linguistic, and practical coping skills that appear to be unnecessary or irrelevant at home. To avoid ongoing annoyance: adjust to reality as necessary, change what is possible, be creative, be patient, and above all use the cross-cultural adjustment skills you acquired abroad to assist your own reentry.

10. Loss/Compartmentalization Of Experience (Shoeboxing)

Being home, coupled with the pressures of job, family, and friends, often combine to make returnees worried that somehow they will “lose” the experience. Many fear that it will somehow become compartmentalized like souvenirs or photo albums kept in a box and only occasionally taken out and looked at. You do not have to let that happen: maintain your contacts abroad; seek out and talk to people who have had experiences similar to yours; practice your cross-cultural skills; continue language learning. Remember and honor both your hard work and the fun you had while abroad.

Top Five Tips for Returning from an Internship Abroad

1 – Be prepared for reverse culture shock to come your way!

- Read and work through the activities in this workbook.
- Check out some of the recommended readings and websites.
- Check out resources on the Alumni Section of the IE₃ website.
- Talk with fellow world travelers about what it was like for them.

2 – Give yourself a break!

- It's easy to get wrapped into the whirlwind of returning. Take a mini-vacation weekend after a few weeks with a close friend, family member or even some new fellow international travelers to decompress.

3 – Reserve judgment and be aware of the impact you are having on others.

- Just as you worked hard to avoid judging the values and lifestyles of your host country, try to use that same skill now that you are seeing your home through a new set of lenses.
- We are often so excited about talking about our experiences with everyone, we don't realize that we are not taking time to hear about how things are going with them. Be sure to check in with your friends and family as well.

4 – Find a community of world travelers.

- These are the folks who will talk endlessly with you about your experiences and will have some great stories you can identify with as well.
- Community Groups often meet in coffee shops or pubs to practice their language skills.
- International Student Associations on campus are full of students who may be going through what you went through when you went abroad.
- Find your fellow IE₃ interns through IE₃ alumni activities. They really know what's going on and can identify on a lot of levels!

5 – Get involved with your university, local schools and/ or community groups. Following are some ways past interns have shared their experiences:

- Presentations on overseas experiences in schools, community groups, and on campus.
- Assisting with promotion and pre-departure training for future interns.
- Language tutoring and translation, both on and off campus.
- Participation in international campus events such as International Week and Foreign Language and International Studies Day.
- Assisting faculty and students with class presentations, international research projects, course assignments, special event planning.
- Skill-building and career preparation with staff in offices which provide international programs.
- Creation of photo exhibits and cultural artifacts from various countries around the world.
- Peer advising for overseas programs.
- Cooperative projects with international students.
- Individualized international research projects and activities.

Possible Outcomes Of An International Experience

From *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Students' Guide To Strategies For Language And Culture Learning And Use*

This sheet provides a handy reference of skills students may develop as a direct result of their experiences abroad. Use this to spark ideas for creating a résumé, preparing for an interview, and reflecting upon your experiences.

Skills

- Understand cultural differences and similarities
- Adapt to new environments
- Learn through listening and observing
- Establish rapport quickly
- Function with a high level of ambiguity
- Take initiative and risks
- Utilize time management skills
- Identify problems and utilize available resources to solve the problems
- Accept responsibility
- Communicate despite barriers
- Learn quickly
- Handle difficult situations
- Handle stress
- Manage/organize
- Lead others in formal/informal groups
- Conduct research despite language and cultural differences
- Cope with rejection

Qualities

- Self-reliance
- High energy level/enthusiasm
- Appreciation of diversity
- Perseverance
- Flexibility
- Open-mindedness
- Assertiveness
- Inquisitiveness
- Self-confidence
- Self-knowledge
- Independence

Professional Experience

What are some terms specific to the student's career field? Brainstorm some here:

Life-Long Learning After Study Abroad

From Maximizing Study Abroad: A Students' Guide To Strategies For Language And Culture Learning And Use

Here are some suggestions from veteran returnees on how to transform your study abroad experience into life-long learning.

Continue Your Language And Intercultural Education

Whether through formal or informal instruction, there are many opportunities to continue studying the language and culture of interest after you've returned. Universities and community colleges offer many choices for foreign language instruction, and many offer some of the less commonly taught languages as well. Private language schools also provide opportunities to practice and brush up on language skills through informal classes. Many universities and schools offer language exchange or "tandem" programs that match a native speaker, usually an international student or scholar, with someone interested in that student's home language and culture. In exchange, the partner can tutor them in English.

Involve Your Friends

Invite your friends to a dinner once in a while where you have potluck international parties. Use this as a chance to learn not only about the food, but to have your friends share their experiences with other cultures and what they are doing now to keep an international perspective alive.

Write About Your Experiences

Magazines and newsletters, both on campus and off, will be interested in reviewing and possibly publishing accounts of your overseas experience and the unique perspective you now have. This is an excellent way for you to share with others what it's like living in another country. Most of your audience will not have experienced what you did, so by sharing your stories, intercultural encounters, and travels with them, you allow them to enter into your world; and perhaps you may even inspire them to take steps toward their own journey abroad!

Keep The International Connections Alive

Many returnees report regretting that they did not keep in touch with their new friends after returning home. You will feel torn, like your heart and mind is split between two countries. The good news is that with the Internet, it is easier now more than ever to maintain contact with people halfway around the world. Writing letters and e-mail is also an excellent way to maintain your newly acquired language skills. As more and more nations have Internet connections, the amount as well as the variety of information available via the Web has mushroomed. Online newspapers give you immediate access to news on current events that often are not reported in U.S. newspapers.

Make New International Connections

Most universities and colleges have active international student organizations that tend to be organized and attended by both international students and U.S. Americans. Many professional and community organizations exist that have cultural exchange and learning as one of their goals. Find out when the next meeting is and check it out.

Seek Out International Volunteer And Employment Opportunities

There are a multitude of opportunities for you to volunteer or find employment that let you utilize your bilingual and bicultural skills:

- Become a homestay family to an international student. Agencies and universities are always looking for suitable homestay families for students, and this is perhaps one of the best means of keeping connected internationally. Be willing to accept a student outside of your own experience and expand your cultural horizons.
- Volunteer or intern in a study abroad office. Your international skills and knowledge about living overseas can be put to valuable use by advising prospective study abroad students and by participating in pre-departure and re-entry orientation programs.
- Volunteer at an office for international students. Offices that work with international students tend to be understaffed and can use volunteers to do a number of vital tasks such as transporting students from the airport, or organizing a drive to collect used household goods and winter clothing for international students, or organizing events or volunteering at orientation for new students.
- Become a buddy or tutor for international students. Already knowing how it feels to go through cross-cultural adjustment in a foreign country, you have a unique perspective and can better understand the needs of international students studying in the U.S. Use those cross-cultural skills to help others and, in turn, deepen your own learning and make valuable international connections.
- Seek out volunteer or work positions at international organizations located in your area. You might be surprised at the number and breadth of international linkages that already exist in your area.
- Volunteer to work with refugees or immigrants in your community. The needs and backgrounds of refugees and immigrants in this country vary tremendously, but they typically do not have the kind of resources that international students have. More and more communities around the country have refugee communities that could use the support of culturally sensitive volunteers.
- Act as a tour guide for visitors from your host country. Many companies now have in-house opportunities for bilingual/bicultural translators and interpreters.
- Seek out opportunities through work, school, or other means to go abroad again. Use your cultural and linguistic fluency to accompany a delegation or tour to your country of interest. They do need you and your skills, even if they might not be aware of it yet!
- A wide variety of materials are available dealing with how to find an international job, whether you want to travel abroad again or be based in the U.S.
- There are also many opportunities for interning or volunteering overseas, which may be a great next step for you. Some of these experiences are longer term (1 to 2 years) and some are available for a few months or less.

Keep in mind that as more and more connections worldwide are formed, there will be even greater need for your international skills and perspectives. As someone who has experienced another culture first-hand, you are well equipped to contribute to the growth in international and intercultural awareness happening at home and throughout the world.

Future Pathways beyond the International Internships

Graduate School: At Home or Abroad?

Is the continuation of your academic career your next step? If you're thinking about going to graduate school, your first two steps should be to talk to your academic advisor and pay a visit to your campus career center. They will help you to learn how to identify programs that match your interests and goals and get you started in the application process.

If you're thinking about going to graduate school abroad, there are several things to consider in the application process. First of all, pinpoint what you want to study. Next, determine which schools offer the best programs. (This is where your faculty advisor may be of particular assistance.) How will you finance your studies? U.S. Federal Aid and loans may not be available for all programs overseas. Whatever you decide, you'll first have to deal with taking the entry exams, which are offered every few months. These tests may not be required by schools overseas, but it is still a good idea to take them now while your schooling is fresh, just in case your plans change to include a graduate program in the U.S. To find out when your particular test is being offered, stop by your career services office. Also, the Princeton Review keeps an excellent website with information on graduate school exams at www.review.com.

Study, work, internships or research abroad are commonly integrated into US-based graduate degree programs, and students often use the opportunity to return to their study abroad country or explore a different one. We recommend planning your international experience early on in your graduate degree program in order to make sure that the work you do overseas relates directly to your degree requirements. Graduate-level internships through IE3 Global Internships are also possible. Consult our website for a full list of available opportunities. There is no cookie-cutter approach to graduate study abroad and you are encouraged to talk with your academic advisers, peers, professors, the graduate program that you are considering, and Career Services staff to determine the right opportunity for you.

For students who studied an Asian language and wish to continue after they graduate visit: <http://www.blakemorefoundation.org/>

Resources for International Study and Fellowships

The following is a partial list of scholarships, fellowships and grants that provide funding for graduate study abroad. More information on these and other graduate fellowships may be available through your campus international office.

Scholarships

Fulbright Scholarship

<http://www.iie.org>, Fulbright link

- Institute of International Education
- For study, research, or teaching abroad
- Applications are to ONE specific country
- If more than one semester of study in a country, don't apply to that country.
- Funds awarded

Marshall Scholarship

<http://www.marshallscholarship.org/>

- Marshall Scholarships “finance young Americans of high ability to study for a degree in the United Kingdom”
- For study at any UK university, including the “Big Three”
- Need a 3.7 GPA minimum to apply

The George J. Mitchell Scholarship

<http://www.us-irelandalliance.org/scholarships.html>

- Scholarship for study in Ireland
- NOT for “Irish Studies”
- Competitive – modeled as the “Marshall Scholarship to Ireland”

Rhodes Scholarship

<http://www.rhodesscholar.org/>

- For study at Oxford University, UK
- Must have impressive grades and leadership experience

Thomas J. Watson Fellowship

<http://www.watsonfellowship.org/>

- A one-year grant for travel and study outside the US
- Must be a student at one of the 50 participating institutions
- Free-formed, non-study proposals

The Samuel Huntington Public Service Award

<http://www.masselectric.com/inside/edsvcs/samuel/index.htm>

- Provides an annual stipend of \$10,000 for a graduating college senior to pursue public service anywhere in the world

David L. Boren Scholarship

www.iie.org (Boren scholarship link)

- National Security Education Program (NSEP) David L. Boren Undergraduate Scholarships
- Offers undergraduates the resources to study the language and culture of a non-Western country
- Intern for the federal department of your choice

Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (McNair Scholars Program)

- For general information, visit <http://www.mcnair.cmich.edu/RonaldMcNair.html>
- For a list of universities that support McNair Scholars, visit <http://www.rochester.edu/College/McNair-Program/AppIncentives.html>
- Created to increase educational opportunities to students who are from low-income, first-generation families, and/or those who are from ethnic backgrounds traditionally

underrepresented in graduate education. It is funded through the Department of Education.

- Apply through home college or university.

Rotary Ambassador of Goodwill Scholarships

http://www.rotary.org/foundation/educational/amb_scho/prospect/index.html

Some Rotary Clubs offer Ambassadorial Scholarship opportunities to increase international peace and understanding through graduate study abroad. Please refer to the club in your home district to find out whether they sponsor ambassadorial scholarships and find more information, including eligibility criteria.

Rhodes Scholarships

<http://www.rhodesscholar.org/>

Rhodes Scholarships enable outstanding students to pursue a second degree from the University of Oxford.

US-Ireland Alliance Fellowship

www.mitchellscholar.org

The George J. Mitchell Scholarship is a national post-graduate fellowship awarded for one year of study at an institution of higher learning in Ireland or Northern Ireland.

Alternative Sources of Funding

Finding Funders: <http://www.fdncenter.org/funders/>

The Grantsmanship Center: <http://www.tgci.com/intl/>

International Funding Sources:

http://research.uiowa.edu/dsp/main/?get=internat_funding_sources

The Ford Foundation: <http://www.fordfound.org/>

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation: <http://www.packfound.org/>

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: <http://www.rwjf.org/index.jsp>

The Pew Charitable Trusts: <http://www.rwjf.org/index.jsp>

W.K. Kellogg Foundation: <http://www.wkkf.org/>

MacArthur Foundation: <http://www.macfdn.org/>

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: <http://www.mellon.org/>

The Starr Foundation: <http://fdncenter.org/grantmaker/starr/>

The Rockefeller Foundation: <http://www.rockfound.org/>

The Annie E. Casey Foundation: <http://www.aecf.org/>

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation: <http://www.mott.org/>

The Robert W. Woodruff Foundation: <http://www.woodruff.org/>

The Annenberg Foundation: <http://www.whannenberg.org/>

(Adapted from materials by Alex Trayford, Assistant Dean of Studies and Director of Scholar Programs, Wheaton College, Norton, MA.)

Additional Graduate Programs and Search Engines

- Association of Professional Schools in International Affairs: <http://www.apsia.org>
- Comparative and International Education Society: <http://www.cies.ws/default.html>
- Peterson's Higher Ed Guides: <http://www.petersons.com/graduate/gsector.html>
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators:
<http://www.naspa.org/gradprep/index.cfm>
- GradSchools.com: <http://www.gradschools.com>
- SIT graduate programs: <http://www.sit.edu/degree.html>
- Gradschools.com: <http://www.international.gradschools.com>

Paid International Internships and Work Opportunities

Websites

- Idealist: Action without Borders <http://www.idealist.org>
- Directory of International Internships (Michigan State University)
<http://www.isp.msu.edu/Internationalinternships>
- University of Michigan Work Abroad
<http://www.umich.edu/~icenter/overseas/work/waoverweb.html>
- International Internships and Volunteer Programs: International Options for Students and Professionals, Cantrell and Modderno (1992) <http://www.internabroad.com/search.cfm>
- Carl Duisberg Society (CDS): <http://www.cdsintl.org/>
- Live & Work Abroad Guides: Books about Working & Living Overseas
<http://www.escapeartist.com/>

Books

- Alternative Travel Directory: The Complete Guide to Traveling, Studying & Living Overseas, David Cline, ed.
- Alternatives to the Peace Corps: A Directory of Third World and US Volunteer Opportunities, Jennifer S. Willsea, Meagan Reule (to be published later this year)
- The Peace Corps and More: 175 Ways to Work, Study and Travel at Home & Abroad, Medea Benjamin, Miya Rodolfo-Sioson

Magazines

- Transitions Abroad Magazine <http://www.transitionsabroad.com>
- Abroad View Magazine <http://www.abroadviewmagazine.com/>
- Glimpse Magazine <http://glimpseabroad.org>

Graduate Work in International Fields

Returned study abroad students are often interested in pursuing graduate work in international education or comparative international education. The following lists were compiled from a listserv discussion of International Education professionals. These lists are not exhaustive. Inclusion does not imply endorsement.

International Education

The following schools offer degrees in International Education or a similar field:

- Boston University
- Florida State University
- George Washington University (Washington D.C.)
- Harvard University
- Lesley University (Massachusetts)
- New York University
- School for International Training (Vermont)
- University of the Pacific in collaboration with Intercultural Communication Institute in Portland, Oregon.
- University of San Francisco
- University of Oregon
- University of Southern California

Comparative International Education or International Educational Development

The following schools offer degrees in comparative international education:

- American University (Washington D.C.)
- Claremont Graduate University (California)
- Columbia University (New York)
- Florida International University
- George Washington University (Washington D.C.)
- Harvard University
- Indiana University Bloomington
- Iowa State University of Science and Technology
- Loyola University Chicago (Illinois)
- The Pennsylvania State University
- Stanford University
- State University of New York at Buffalo
- University of California Los Angeles
- University of Florida
- University of Maryland
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Minnesota in Minneapolis
- University of Pittsburgh

Re-entry Shock: List of Common Problems

Despite all their pre-planning and work to deal with their return, students will probably still encounter some common problems as they re-integrate into life at home. As one of the primary “actors” in their life as they return, you can play a significant role in helping them overcome their problems. Please check out this list problems and solutions we provide to students and then think about some action items you and your student can begin to implement as they settle back in. Students are encouraged to complete this activity as part of their return from their internship as well.



BRINGING IT HOME: Avoiding Culture Shock Déjà Vu

As you read through the common problems and possible solutions to combat reverse culture shock write down personal action items in the right hand column.

Common Problem	Possible Solutions	Personal Action Items
1. You may feel confused, especially in the first few weeks after your return, because the values, attitudes, and lifestyles you learned in your host family conflict with predominant patterns at home.	Deep differences in cultural patterns require time to explore and understand. Take time to evaluate <i>both</i> cultural perspectives before deciding on your preference and integrating it into your lifestyle.	<i>Example:</i> Write down what you value most about home and about your host country. Then write down where you will integrate your different approaches to life...with your relationships, daily routine, decision making skills, etc.
2. Sometimes friends and family at home do not seem interested in hearing about aspects of your experience that you find meaningful and important.	You should realize that they may be adjusting to changes that have taken place in you. Furthermore, they may never have had an experience comparable with yours and so may have difficulty sharing your enthusiasm. Be patient and seek other returnees who can help put your experience into perspective.	

Common Problem	Possible Solution	Personal Action Items
<p>3. Friends and family may treat you as the same person you were before you left without recognizing the changes you have been through. But as a result of these changes, you might feel a need for new or modified personal relationships that acknowledge the changed or expanded dimensions of your personality.</p>	<p>Remember that your friends and family may be feeling uncertain about how you have changed or grown. Discuss your feelings about yourself and others with them, trying to encourage positive changes in old relationships. Also seek out new friendships with people who are compatible with the “changing you.”</p>	
<p>4. You may feel uncomfortable talking about your feelings of affection for your host family because your own family feels left out or possibly jealous. Friends might also seem to be envious or jealous of the experience you have had.</p>	<p>Be sensitive to the feelings of others who have not had the opportunity you have. If necessary, try to tone down your discussions; perhaps you are encouraging these feelings in others by dwelling too much on your own experiences. Try to listen to what has happened to them while you were gone, too.</p>	
<p>5. You might be anxious or apprehensive about your academic situation because the subjects you enjoyed studying abroad have little relevance to your education at home. You might also be confused about future educational and career plans in light of new or uncertain goals and priorities.</p>	<p>Take advantage of the wide range of educational opportunities and alternatives available to you by finding informal and nonacademic ways to continue the study of your favorite subjects. Take time to consider educational and career plans that include your areas of interest. Seek out the advice of your counselors or mentors.</p>	

Common Problem	Possible Solution	Personal Action Items
<p>6. If you find that your attitudes and opinions have changed considerably during your stay abroad and are not widely shared in your home community, you may feel isolated or rejected. Furthermore, you may feel highly critical of your home country because you have new perspectives on it; you may be criticized by others for your “negative attitude.”</p>	<p>Try to keep perspective on your feelings; remember that your opinions and ideas may initially be greatly influenced by the perspectives of your host culture and may not represent your final balanced viewpoint. Share your feelings with others, but be cautious in choosing situations in which to bring up controversial issues.</p>	
<p>7. You may become frustrated because people at home are uninformed about, or uninterested in, other peoples and cultures, including those of your host community. Faced with this lack of concern, you might feel that there is no way for you to take an active role in helping solve the problems of others in the world community.</p>	<p>Attempt to generate local interest in other peoples and their concerns. Use your special status as an intercultural traveler to educate others through private conversations or by public speeches and presentations.</p>	

Career Track Tips

These are some words of wisdom we share with our students regarding preparing to leverage their experience upon their return. You can help them by encouraging them to follow up on these tips. Adding others unique to your field will be great for your students as well.



CAREER TRACK TIP: Become Self Aware

Pay attention to your “passions” during this experience – a first step in career planning. Key in on your interests, skills, personal, work and cultural values and the life experiences you are drawn to. Record these responses in your portfolio like a journal.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Create a Work Portfolio

Keep a portfolio of materials you create. Collect brochures, research material, or any other publications or products you have been involved in. You can bring these to future interviews. Other suggestions on materials to include in your portfolio are mentioned throughout the Career Track Tips. Check out www.career.fsu.edu/ccis/guides/port.html for more information on how to create useful portfolios.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Informational Interviews

Conduct informational interviews (formal or informal) with your colleagues, supervisor and/or people at other organizations to learn more about what people do in this field. It will also help them get to know you better as you settle in. When conducting the interviews, remember the power of the open-ended question. Write down notes during or after your interviews and put it in your work portfolio. Check out www.career.fsu.edu/ccis/guides/infoint.html for helpful tips on how to do this.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Find a Mentor

Hook up with someone who has knowledge, wisdom and experience and can share it with you. In return, offer to help your mentor with a project or task at work.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Ideal Work Environment

While it is still fresh, write down the characteristics of your work environment you liked and those you did not like and put it in your portfolio. This will help clarify your ideal work environment during your job search back home.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Informal Performance Evaluations

Actively seek feedback from your co-workers – not just your supervisor – about your performance. Ask what you do best and where they think you could strengthen your skills. Write this down in your work portfolio for your own skill building.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Resume Prep

Think of how you can express these skills on your resume. Jot down a few anecdotes from your internship that demonstrate these skills so that they stay fresh in your mind for future interviews. Look ahead for tips on identifying what accomplishments, skills and characteristics you should put on your resume.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Letter of Reference

If appropriate, you may want to request an additional formal letter of recommendation from your supervisor, with a general greeting (e.g. To Whom It May Concern) that you can keep for your portfolio. If you do, please forward a copy to IE₃. We will keep it with your file if you need to retrieve a copy within the next 5 years.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Keeping in Touch

Communication shouldn't end when you leave your internship. Keep people updated on major events in your life (graduation, new job, etc.) via email. When you need to ask them for a reference or an introduction, it won't feel like you are starting the relationship from scratch again. Keep an address list of current contact information in your work portfolio.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Resume Update

Update your resume in the first few weeks of returning home while your new experiences, accomplishments, skills and characteristics are still noticeable to you.

CAREER TRACK TIP: Show your Appreciation

Thank everyone who has assisted you throughout your internship experience.

