

Student's Guidelines for Vetting New Organizations for Work/Internships Abroad

Student's guidelines for evaluating and vetting an organization overseas with no prior track record with the University (volunteer, internship, employment, research, consulting).

Reputation of the Organization

Students should work/intern with reputable organizations that provide support for student learning/work and whose goals are not in conflict with the goals and missions of the student and the university.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Is the organization legally recognized and in good standing in the country in which it operates?
- Has the organization been vetted by reputable partners or objective agencies?
- In the case of development or humanitarian agencies, how does the organization measure its outcomes? Is there evidence that the organization's outcomes are creating positive change? Can the organization document program outcomes and the impact of their programs on the local community and culture?
- Is the output and work of the organization adapted to the local community and culture?
- Research the organization on the internet, news and social media, look for the following:
 - Leadership (who is in charge, background, funding, mission)
 - Date established
 - Locations around the world, if applicable
 - Products, projects and services offered
 - Types of programs
 - Number of employees, opportunities
- Email the organization to request the following information:
 1. Description of work/internship program
 2. Information on:
 - How many students per year do they host on their work/internship program?
 - From what universities? How do they recruit?
 - Any prerequisites that the students need to complete for the work/internship?
 - Paid or unpaid?
 - Full-time or part-time?
 - What majors?
 - What level/year in school?
 - Average length of work/internships/timeframe?
 - Application process?
 - Language needed? What is the language of work/instruction?
 - Are scholarships available?
 - What costs are students responsible for?
 - Other included benefits (i.e. housing, meals) of the program?
- Ask for testimonials from other student workers/interns, faculty or other people familiar with the organization and its work/internship program regarding the quality of the program, projects, assignments, work atmosphere, support from staff/colleagues, supervision, use of language skills, accommodation experience, incidents (if any), etc.
- What other similar options does the university have in that city or country?
- What skills, qualifications and/or academic background is the employer seeking in student workers/interns?

Quality Learning for the Student

Students interning or working abroad should only be placed with organizations that can provide a quality learning experience that ideally expands their academic learning on campus.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Does the placement have students doing work that is consistent with the goals of the student's education at UMass?
- Does the placement match the skills of the student?
- Is the placement more than simply humanitarian tourism, or short-term volunteering, in that it uses more than just the student's hands and back and instead provides the student the chance to use and expand his or her knowledge and skills?
- Does the work provide the desired number of hours [or recommended hours per academic credit over the term or semester]?
- Does the organization provide adequate training, skill building and mentoring to students?
- What meaningful projects is the student worker/intern able to complete?
- Will the student be working independently or on group projects?
- What language level is required of the student?
- In case of conflict between the employer/staff and the student, what mechanisms are there available to reach a resolution?
- What are the methods or protocols in place to evaluate both student performance and student satisfaction with the work/internship experience?
- What happens if the student worker/internship and the participant are not a good fit?

Logistics

Students should avoid placement with organizations that cannot provide adequate on-ground support.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Is there an agreement with the organization defining duties, policies and expectations of the student and spelling out what the student can expect from the organization?
- Does the organization have a plan in place to provide safety and security for the student? Is there a plan in place for safety, health, or security emergencies?
- Does the organization have at least one full-time employee and an internship coordinator or resources to provide support to students?
- Will the student receive adequate cultural, functional and logistical (travel, insurance, emergency planning, etc.) training (on campus) before the work/internship?
- What are the estimated costs of living? Does host provide a stipend to cover cost of living (food, housing, transportation)?
- Supervisor available for worker/intern?
- Duration of work/internship? Can it be extended?
- Is housing available? If not, can the employer arrange a home-stay?
- Emergency contact details for supervisor or other contact at employer
- Organizational culture, dress code, etc.
- What arrangements are necessary for the appropriate immigration paperwork?

Resources for Vetting Organizations

- 100 list of best NGOs <http://theglobaljournal.net/top100ngos/>
- Inside NGO www.insidengo.org/job-category/internships-fellowships
- Inter Action www.interaction.org
- Ashoka www.ashoka.org
- Skoll Foundation <http://skoll.org>
- Schwab Foundation www.schwabfound.org
- Acumen Foundation www.acumen.org
- Echoing Green www.echoinggreen.org
- Mulago Foundation <http://mulagofoundation.org>
- J. Wango <https://www.wango.org/resources.aspx?section=ngodir>

Adapted from the Guidelines for Vetting International Internship Placements or Social Problem-Solving Organizations for BYU (Brigham Young University) Student Involvement http://kennedy.byu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ISPinternship-NGO-vetting_16aug18.pdf

And NAFSA.org (Best Practices on How to Vet Partners)

NGO Aid Map: InterAction's NGO Aid Map aims to increase the amount of publicly available data on international development and humanitarian response by providing detailed project information through interactive maps and data visualizations. We believe that NGO Aid Map gives a picture of international aid that would not exist otherwise.

<https://ngoaidmap.org/p/about-sector-coding>

InterAction NGO Standards: Accountability, Transparency, Effectiveness (Also see *Reference Sources* on pg 28)

https://www.interaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NGO-Standards_December-2018.pdf

Ethnic NewsWatch database may have news about specific NGOs: [Ethnic NewsWatch](#)

Full-text articles from newspapers, magazines and journals of ethnic communities in the United States. In several languages, 1965-present. Available on campus to all, or off-campus to UMass Amherst students, staff and faculty with an UMass Amherst IT NetID (user name) and password.

This is a link to a pdf that lists non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council as of 1 September 2018. There are many more NGOs out there, but this may provide names of NGOs that are working with the UN Economic and Social Council, as a way to evaluate or vet them.

<http://csonet.org/content/documents/INFList%202018.pdf>

For those considering experiential learning abroad, you are required to connect with the UMass International Programs Office (IPO) <https://www.umass.edu/ipo/education-abroad/start-here>. Andrea Drake can meet with students one-to-one to provide guidance on global travel regarding health, safety, and security:

Andrea Campbell Drake, M.Ed.

Director of International Health, Safety, and Security

413.545.2710

UMassAmherst

School of Public Health
& Health Sciences

Office of Career Planning

<http://www.umass.edu/sphhs/careers>