U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

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The U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program

The U.S. Department of State

The U.S. Department of State is the leading U.S. foreign affairs agency responsible for advancing freedom for the benefit of the American people and the international community. The Department's employees, Foreign Service Officers and Specialists, Civil Service professionals and Foreign Service Nationals work at more than 270 locations overseas, and throughout the United States. Together, they help to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world composed of well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and act responsibly within the international system.

The Department selects and hires employees who can accomplish America's mission of diplomacy at home and around the world, including Foreign Service Officers (FSO), Foreign Service Specialists (FSS) and Civil Service (CS) professionals. For those pursuing undergraduate, graduate or other advanced degrees, and professionals who are interested in an executive development program in public service, the Department offers a number of internships and fellowships.

The U.S. Department of State's Mission

Shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just, and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere.

U.S. Department of State Structure

The U.S. Department of State is made up of bureaus with responsibility for the many aspects of U.S. foreign policy and the general operations and administration of our diplomatic missions abroad. There are two types of bureaus: Geographic and Functional.

- **Geographic Bureaus:** Oversee policies for a given region of the world. Geographic bureaus include African Affairs (AF), East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP), European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR), Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), and Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA).
- **Functional Bureaus:** Focus on specific issues and are responsible for policy areas which affect all regions and countries. These bureaus include the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), International Organization Affairs (IO), Political-Military Affairs (PM), and Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES). Other functional bureaus have responsibility for different critical operations and aspects of the administration of the Department of State, including Administration (A), Consular Affairs (CA), Diplomatic Security (DS), Legislative Affairs (H), Human Resources (HR), and Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO).

There are six Under Secretaries: Arms Control and International Security Affairs (T); Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment (E); Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (J); Management (M); Political Affairs (P); Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R)

Each bureau is led by an Assistant Secretary. Assistant Secretaries are Senate-confirmed career and political appointees responsible for serving as senior advisors to the Secretary of State on the issues falling within the authority of their bureau. Assistant Secretaries report to the next level of senior leadership,

the Under Secretaries. U.S. embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions to international organizations fall under the authority of their respective geographic bureau (AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA, and WHA) or functional bureau (IO).

Most U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program opportunities are offered at the bureau level. Students can work in one of the many offices which make up the respective geographic or functional bureaus. U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program opportunities are also offered at U.S. embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions abroad. There are two bureaus that offer internship opportunities in cities throughout the United States: the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

Watch Our Employee Videos

The U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program

Unpaid Internship Program

The U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program is an unpaid, intensive internship offering U.S. citizen undergraduate and graduate students a chance to witness and participate in the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy, working closely with representatives of the U.S. Department of State's Foreign and Civil Services. The program is both professionally and academically beneficial, providing participants with hands-on experience in a federal agency setting, and insight into the substance and daily operations of U.S. foreign policy.

It is considered an intensive educational and experiential learning experience, which provides professional experience and personal growth and development within a foreign affairs environment.

About half of U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program participants serve in Washington, D.C., with a limited number of opportunities available at Department field offices and facilities in other cities in the United States. Approximately half of these opportunities are offered in many of the more than 270 U.S. embassies, consulates and missions to international organizations around the world.

As part of the U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program, participants will:

- Gain practical, professional experience in a foreign affairs environment
- Serve in any one of three program seasons: Spring, Summer, or Fall. Each season lasts approximately 10 weeks. At a minimum, eight (8) weeks must be completed and it must be completed within the time frame of the application season.
  - Spring: January – April
  - Summer: May – August
  - Fall: September – December
- Be expected to work full time, 40 hours per week.
- Potentially obtain educational credit - Applicants who are selected for a U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program can contact the selecting bureau, or your academic advisor, if they require further details about the program to support their request for academic credit.

• Experiential Learning

While the duties of U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program participants vary from bureau to bureau, office to office, and embassy to embassy, it is not uncommon for these students to:

- Participate in meetings with senior-level U.S. Government or foreign government officials
- Draft, edit, or contribute to cables, reports, communications, talking points, or other materials used by policymakers in furthering U.S. foreign policy objectives
- Support events, including international and/or multilateral meetings and conferences, or
- Engage directly with U.S. audiences in helping to explain the work of the Department of State or foreign audiences in helping to promote U.S. foreign policy and improve understanding of U.S. culture and society

• Eligibility Requirements

- U.S. citizenship
- Undergraduates (juniors and seniors) and Graduate Students
  - A student is an individual who is enrolled in a degree-seeking program in an accredited college or university
  - An applicant is considered a junior if he/she will have completed all sophomore credits (60 or more semester hours or 90 quarter hours) by the time the internship begins and will be entering at least the junior year immediately following completion of the internship
  - An individual is still considered a student if he/she has been out of school, between semesters or school years, for not more than five (5) months and have plans to return to school within five (5) months or less
  - An individual enrolled in school and receiving credit toward their degree for participating in the Student Internship Program is also considered a student
  - Students must be returning to school immediately following the internship in order to qualify for the program. In addition, students must attach an official or unofficial transcript to their application confirming they are a current student.

• Other Requirements

- Minimum 2.5 GPA
- Ability to obtain and maintain a security clearance

The U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program is not part of the Pathways Program. The U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program does not provide non-competitive conversion to Pathways Internships or to career positions in the U.S. Department of State's Foreign or Civil Services.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

(1) Not all posts abroad participate in the program every season. A given geographic bureau, covering several overseas posts, may or may not choose to accept Student Interns during a specific period of the year. And, individual posts may also decline to accept students for various reasons, including conditions on the ground. Finally, a bureau may be listed as potentially available, but the post may decline to select a student.

(2) The U.S. Department of State does not enter into contracts or formal agreements with individual colleges or universities in order for their students to participate in the U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program. All eligible students with U.S. citizenship are welcome to apply and participate.

Online Application Process

Those interested in applying for the U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program must begin by visiting the Student Programs section under the Intern tab of careers.state.gov, clicking the "U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program" and continuing through the "Gateway to State." The "Gateway to State" button will only be available when an application is open and active. Applicants can also go directly to USAJOBS*, and search for the U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program.

There are five (5) sections to the online application, including a Statement of Interest:

1. Eligibility
2. Series Grade Questions
3. All Grade Questions
4. Documents
5. Application Review

Navigating the USAJOBS Application

An applicant is in the actual online application when they see "The U.S. Department of State" and "Diplomacy in Action" at the top of the screen.

Applicants must complete all sections, attach all required documents, and submit their application in order to be considered for the U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program.

To qualify, applicants must be certain to:

- Select up to two (2) bureaus or posts abroad
- Specify a country or countries
- Include a well-written Statement of Interest
- Provide all required documents

Bureau Selection: Applicants must select up to two (2) bureaus or posts abroad to which they would like to be considered. An applicant will only be considered by the bureaus or posts specified in the application.

Country Selection: Select the geographic bureau with responsibility for the country in which you are interested in working. For example, if you are interested in interning at the U.S. Embassy in Dakar, Senegal, first select the Bureau of African Affairs (AF). Later in the application, you will be prompted to choose the country in which the Embassy or Consulate is located. Applicants are considered only for the country/countries they select. Some countries host multiple diplomatic facilities, including embassies, consul generals, and missions to international organizations. In such cases, an application may be reviewed by multiple posts within a given country; however, this is not a guarantee. Each geographic bureau and overseas post determines how best to review applications and make their selections.

If a country is not listed in the application, it is not accepting students for that season.

Statement of Interest: Applications include space for a short Statement of Interest (maximum 2,500 characters, spaces included). Selecting officials rely heavily on the Statement of Interest. Applicants should:

- Ensure that their statements are well written and free of spelling and grammatical errors

- Include any academic or personal areas of interest, foreign languages, or other skill sets that make them particularly useful to a given bureau, office, or overseas post
- Consider including information about any specific disadvantages they may have overcome, or personal experience that makes them unique

Required Documents: Applicants must provide proof of student status in the form of an official or unofficial transcript. The transcripts must be attached to the submitted application. If using official transcripts, applicants must attach them to their application per the instructions provided in the application. The application offers candidates two methods to attach their transcript to their application: by fax or by upload. If the transcript is not successfully attached to the application, the application will be rated ineligible.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to upload their transcript to their application. Technical difficulties tend to arise through the faxing process that lead to applications being received as incomplete after the closing of the announcement.

Eligibility: Some eligibility questions are exclusionary. The application does not automatically stop candidates who do not meet program eligibility requirements from continuing with the application. Applicants will only be notified after the closing of the announcement if their application is disqualified based upon responses to these questions. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to carefully read the program eligibility requirements before applying.

Domestic: Applicants for domestic U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program opportunities apply to work in the offices that make up the Department's functional and geographic bureaus. Some bureaus have individual offices to which interested participants can apply. In such cases, if an applicant selects a specific office, he/she will only be considered by that office. Other bureaus allow students to apply to the entire bureau, and an application can be reviewed by multiple offices.

**** New USAJOBS users must create a USAJOBS account, and build a resume using the USAJOBS Resume Builder. Applicants must create (not upload) a USAJOBS resume in order to move forward to the actual application. Once a profile has been created and a resume built, they can click the "Apply Online" button on the right-hand side of the vacancy announcement.***

Applicants will be taken to another screen, which will require them to identify and highlight their USAJOBS resume, to verify that they have reviewed the resume, and to certify that the information submitted is true and made in good faith. Applicants must then click on "Apply for this position now!"

Once applicants have started an application, they can access and edit that application at any time up to the closing of the vacancy announcement.

• The Selection Process

There are several steps in the selection process; students should understand the following:

- **Completed Applications:** The Student Programs Office receives the full application package of those eligible and then forwards to the bureaus/posts the applicants have selected.
- **Bureau/Post Selections:** Individual bureaus/posts make their selections and then submit the request to the Student Programs Office. Bureaus/posts often:

- Contact students directly for interviews
- Seek confirmation of acceptance of an internship offer

All offers, made via phone or e-mail, directly from the bureaus/posts are considered tentative until verified by the central Student Programs Office.

- **Student Programs Office:** Reviews and clarifies the bureau/post selections and coordinates the official notification to students selected
- **Primary/Alternate Selections:** The Student Programs Office first notifies selected candidates via e-mail, informing them of whether they have been selected as a primary or alternate and initiating the security clearance process. Primary selectees are the bureau's or post's first choice. An alternate is chosen to replace a primary selectee in the event that a primary declines the offer or does not receive his/her security clearance.
- **Conditional Offer Letters:** The Student Programs Office sends both primary and alternate selectees conditional offer letters, providing the specific selecting bureau/post. The letters also provide students a bureau point of contact.
- **Security Clearance Process:** Students tentatively selected for the program must undergo a background investigation and receive a security clearance. The clearance process generally takes approximately 60–120 days to complete from the time the forms are received by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS). Investigations may take substantially longer than 90 days if a candidate:
  - has had extensive travel, education, residence and/or employment overseas
  - has dual citizenship, foreign contacts, immediate family or relatives who are not citizens of the United States
  - has a foreign-born spouse
  - has a security, suitability, or medical issue to resolve

  These issues could include current or a past history of drug or alcohol abuse, as well as a recent history of credit problems.

  Further information regarding issues of dual citizenship and foreign influence is available at careers.state.gov. Although these problems will not necessarily preclude you from receiving a security clearance, they will lengthen the time required to complete the clearance process.

  A candidate's preliminary notification of acceptance will include instructions on how to initiate the security clearance electronically. ***When this letter is received, please complete the online clearance process by the date indicated. This is important! Diplomatic Security may be unable to process your security clearance request if you fail to meet that deadline***.

- **Dual Nationality/Close Family Ties:** Dual nationals, recently naturalized citizens, and applicants who have significant and close family ties to a particular country are encouraged NOT to seek an internship in that country. In such cases, there is a strong possibility that the applicant will either not receive the clearance in time to participate in the program, or be denied clearance altogether.
- **Random Drug Testing:** All interns serving in positions that require a clearance for access to information classified as "Secret" or above will be subject to the Department's random employee drug testing program.

• Start Dates

Domestic Opportunities: U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program participants working in Washington, D.C., are expected to attend an orientation session, which is offered weekly during the season to which they have applied. Participants are able to select an orientation date/program start date once they have been notified that they have successfully received a security clearance.

Opportunities Abroad: Participants working abroad negotiate their start dates directly with the selecting post. Overseas Student Interns can only coordinate a start date once they have successfully received the necessary security clearance and provided Student Programs with a medical insurance verification form. (See page 11.)

• Travel Requirements for Opportunities Abroad

U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program participants serving at posts outside of the United States are responsible for obtaining a U.S. passport with validity at least six (6) months beyond their proposed stay and a travel visa as required by the country. They are also responsible for purchasing overseas medical insurance that will cover repatriation of remains and medical evacuation overseas.

Application Processing Timetable

	Summer Internship	**Fall Internship**	**Spring Internship**
Application Opens	September	January	May
Application Deadline (including all supporting documents)*	**Mid-October**	**March 1st**	**July 1st**
Selection Process—Students under consideration may be contacted for interviews and may receive tentative offers directly from bureaus/posts	December	April	August
Selectees notified of selection by Student Programs Office in writing or via email	January	May	September
Applicants not selected notified via email by Student Programs Office	January	May	September
Security Clearances	February – April	June – August	October – December
Interns Enter on Duty	**Mid to late May – early July**	**September – October**	**January – February**
Internship Ends	August/September	December/January	April/May

*Historically, applications for Summer internships are due mid-October, March 1 for Fall, and July 1 for Spring.

• Preparing for Your U.S. Department of State Internship

Transportation: For placements domestic and abroad, travel expenses and all travel arrangements are the responsibility of the participant.

Visas: Some countries have visa requirements. If chosen for an opportunity abroad, the selecting bureau or post will provide the student with further details about country entry requirements.

Legal Status: U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program participants are considered student volunteers. Per 5 CFR § 308.102 **(b)**: *A student participating under an agency volunteer program is not considered to be a Federal employee for any purposes other than injury compensation or laws related to the Tort Claims Act. Service is not creditable for leave accrual or any other employee benefits.*

Medical Insurance for Participants Abroad: Students placed overseas are responsible for having medical insurance coverage that is valid abroad and includes medical evacuation and repatriation of remains.

• Networking with Other U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program Participants

The Department also offers the opportunity to explore the Washington Metropolitan Area. During each session, an Intern Activities Coordinator is assigned to the Student Programs staff to plan activities that will enhance your experience. These activities include brown bag lunches with senior Department officials, educational tours, and social activities. The tours allow students to get better insight into the daily functioning of other government organizations. Examples of past tours include: the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Pentagon, and the Capitol, as well as tours of various embassies. Guest speakers include some of the top managers in the Department, who share their career experiences and give students a better understanding of the Department's objectives.

U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program participants who are assigned abroad, and in field offices, can expect to get involved with embassy functions or events appropriate to the area in which they are assigned.

• Appropriate Attire

The U.S. Department of State does not have an official dress code; however, as the leading U.S. foreign affairs agency, the U.S. Department of State is on the front lines of customer service to the public at home and abroad. This mission requires that our employees project competence and professionalism. Therefore, the appearance of employees should also be professional in a way that conveys respect for colleagues, customers, and the work environment and should not pose a safety or health hazard or distraction from work. Flip flops should be worn only when walking to and from the office.

The U.S. Department of State welcomes the cultural diversity of its workforce, and seeks to maintain freedom for personal expression without sacrificing the professional image essential to the performance of its mission.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE BUREAUS/OFFICES

The U.S. Department of State's Student Internship Program offers the opportunity to serve in a bureau or office in the United States or in a U.S. Embassy or consulate overseas.

When the internship application opens for each internship season, students apply to the vacancy announcement which appears on USAJOBS. A section of the application requires students to identify up to two bureaus, offices, or overseas locations for consideration. With this in mind, it will be important for students to become familiar with the functions and responsibilities of each of the bureaus and offices in order to achieve the most fulfilling educational experience.

It is recommended that students visit Alphabetical List of Bureaus and Offices to learn about the domestic organizational components of the U.S. Department of State. Students should view the list under Bureaus and Offices, which are those that may offer internships during the Spring, Summer and Fall.

Students can gain a better understanding in identifying bureaus and offices to which their majors may relate through the Which Office is Right for You? tool on careers.state.gov. Click on Intern>U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program>Quick Links.

Not every bureau or office listed will select an intern for a given season. Nor will you always be able to select the specific office in which you would prefer to work. Bureaus and Offices that intend to select interns during a given internship season will be included in the vacancy announcement under the vacancy announcement question where students can identify their top two choices for consideration. Please note that even in this instance a Bureau or Office may still choose not to select interns for the given internship season due to many factors, including security conditions, changes in work requirements and limited office space.

Domestic Internship Opportunities: Most domestic internships require the student to apply to the overall bureau. In such cases, an eligible student's application will be available for most or all of the offices within the bureau to consider. Therefore, many of the descriptions only provide applicants with a greater understanding of the bureau's mission and organization, and do not indicate a specific choice that will appear on the application.

If a specific office does appear in the application, you can apply directly to that office. In such cases, the office counts as one of your two internship choices for consideration.

Overseas Internship Opportunities: In order to apply to a U.S. embassy, consulate, or mission overseas, you must select the responsible geographical bureau or the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO) as one of your internship choices for consideration. Geographical bureaus include AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA and WHA. In the application, after selecting the geographical bureau, you will be able to select the specific country in which you would like to be considered for an internship.

Some countries host multiple diplomatic facilities. In such cases, a candidate may be considered by more than one post in the same country.

Notes

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U.S. citizenship is required. An equal opportunity employer.

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