

# Experiential Education Employment Opportunities in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria: Options and Informational Resources

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## Introduction

Historically, a study abroad experience has been the primary means by which American college and university students could enhance their level of global/international competence through interactive experiences in a German-speaking environment. In recent years, however, we have begun to broaden the opportunities for interactive experiences abroad through the inclusion of more non-traditional approaches, such as experiential education employment abroad. In using the term "experiential education," I am referring to any type of experience-based activity which is integrated with subject matter to promote student learning (Kendall 11). Such activities would usually have direct linkage to the student's formal academic experience and would be overseen, structured, and evaluated to a greater or lesser extent by an academic mentor. If structured appropriately, experiential education employment abroad could conceivably include internships in the student's major field of study, full-time/part-time jobs in diverse occupational settings, and/or volunteer work supported either wholly or in part by a sponsoring agency.

## A Rationale for Experiential Education Employment Abroad

If the rapid proliferation of such university/college-based experiential education programs such as cooperative education is any indicator, it appears that the present generation of college and university students have a particularly keen interest in pursuing those kinds of academically-related, skill-based

experiences which will enhance their marketability and capabilities as prospective employees. For those students who foresee linkage of their German language study with professional activity, experiential education employment abroad provides a unique opportunity for the direct application of academic skills learned in the classroom to those life situations involving either work or service. The students are afforded opportunity to not only utilize their German language skills on an intensive, protracted basis, but to also gain comparative insights into the inner workings of German-speaking society and acquire enabling skills which might not be afforded the more traditional study abroad student.

Current research on the subject appears to support the value of experiential education. In one of the most recent and most comprehensive studies yet on the subject, Williams et al. (1993) determined that experiential education students, even when involved in an activity of less than five months duration, gain significantly more general and specific kinds of job-related knowledge than students not involved in such activity (51). Further, the participating students appear to gain in the acquisition of "tacit knowledge," that is, "practical know-how" learned informally from job-related experiences (33) and independent of academic knowledge. In a separate study dealing with the impact of living and studying abroad on American students, Oppen et al. (1991) cite the following dimensions of the overseas experience as demonstrably significant in terms of student development: greater foreign language proficiency,<sup>1</sup> enhanced knowledge of the target culture, heightened interest in and awareness of international affairs, and the conviction that such experiences would be either helpful or

very helpful in deciding on a career path and ultimately finding employment.

An increasingly more vocal national mandate is being registered as to the importance of experiential education employment abroad. Paul Simon, in a 1989 address before ACTFL, argued for the importance of enhanced American student employment abroad opportunities and asserted that American businesses involved in international operations must work more closely with the higher education sector to ensure that qualified and motivated juniors, seniors, and graduate students become involved in experiential education employment abroad. These sentiments have been echoed in numerous national reports, most notably the *Report of the National Task Force on Undergraduate Education Abroad* (1990). This report recommended that American colleges and universities encourage "academically-related experiences abroad" as an option for all undergraduate degree programs (3-4). The recently approved Global Education Opportunities Act and the National Security Education Act are but two examples of national legislation designed to promote and fund such innovative international education opportunities as experiential education abroad.

### Implementation Procedures and Considerations

For those U.S. colleges and universities considering the development of experiential education opportunities in the German-speaking countries, there are a significant number of considerations which need to be taken into account prior to the implementation phase.

General factors to be considered carefully during the early self-study phase include: (1) the extent of student interest in and need for such activities; (2) the eligibility criteria for participating students; (3) a determination of the costs involved in developing and overseeing the program, including overseas travel costs for evaluation purposes and the availability of communications technology which will enable frequent contact with the students; (4) broad university support, especially on the part of the cooperating faculty and career development offices as involved partners in the process of implementation, administration and evaluation; (5) a willingness on the part of the faculty and career development offices to commit long hours and travel abroad in order to ensure program quality; (6) the

ability of the home institution to provide the German language training necessary for students to undertake diverse occupational activities; (7) orientation programs both in the United States and abroad which will ensure adequate student preparation for living and working abroad; and (8) the availability of reliable, high-quality student support services abroad by knowledgeable and caring individuals familiar with American college and university students.<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of conclusions drawn from the early self-study phase, three options present themselves: (1) the study committee may conclude that there is inadequate interest and/or support to pursue the implementation of experiential education employment further; (2) it may be concluded that both university/college interest and support are adequate to enable the institution to pursue such implementation independently; or (3) the recommendation may be made that sufficient interest exists to merit implementation, but that resources and/or expertise are lacking which would enable implementation of employment opportunities independently.

For those colleges and universities which fall under the second category, it is imperative that the institutional representatives become fully informed as to rules, procedures, and opportunities in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria which enable American student employment in the respective countries.<sup>3</sup> The Swiss education system is characterized by long-standing, well-developed student apprenticeship programs which help facilitate the placement of foreign student employees. Through agreements with the Swiss government, the USA is limited annually to 150 paid student internships, known as *Stagiaries*. Student interns from the USA must be between the ages of 21-30 and be possessed of significant occupational training prior to assignment. The intern must work in the area of previous occupational training, and the stay is limited to a maximum of 18 months. Part-time and full-time positions are quite numerous in Switzerland in the service sector during the holiday seasons. Swiss employers may not hire foreign student employees directly; rather, the employers solicit student employees through BIGHA, *Sektion Auswanderung und Stagiaries* in Bern. Applications received by BIGHA are then sent to the employment office of the individual cantons. Work may be performed only in the canton which approves the job application. A validated *Einreisebewilligung* is then forwarded by BIGHA to the Swiss

Embassy in the USA for purposes of issuing an employment visa to the student employee. The Swiss Embassy in Washington, D.C. will provide upon request a detailed package of information relating to working in Switzerland.

Experiential education employment opportunities are available as well in Austria. Under most circumstances, student internship employment, as well as full-time/part-time student employment, is permitted only through issuance of a work permit issued by the Austrian State Employment Office. This work permit requirement may be waived if the employment is of six months or less in duration. The Austrian government does limit the number of work permits issued to student employees, and job priority is given to Austrian nationals. Applications for employment must be made by the employer and cannot be initiated by a prospective employee. Civil service employment is not open to foreign workers, and the Austrian government insists that all student employees demonstrate an extremely high level of German language competence for consideration as an employee. Most student employment can be arranged by the Austrian Committee for International Educational Exchange. All visas for student employees are issued by the Austrian Embassy in the United States.

The concept of "learning by doing" is extremely characteristic of the German education system, whereby almost two thirds of all German students between the ages of 15–18 fall under a three-year dual system of education, linking academic study with vocational training in over 440 different areas. Historically, the German government has worked hard to enable highly qualified American students to work in Germany, as exemplified by the efforts of the Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft (funded by the Federal Ministry for Science and Education) which has assisted over 100,000 foreign nationals find vocational and professional training since the CDS' inception. Non-EC nationals who wish to enter Germany on a worker visa are required to obtain a visa prior to entering Germany and must have the approval of the *Ausländerbehörde*. Student employees who will be working as a family helper must register upon arrival in Germany with the regional *Ausländeramt* and undergo a medical examination. The Embassy of Germany in Washington, D.C., approves all student employee visa requests and provides an informational booklet for Americans who intend to work in Germany.

In all cases, students should refer themselves to the Internal Revenue Service's Publication 54 (*Tax*

*Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad*) and Publication 519 (*U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens*). The United States maintains reciprocal employment tax treaties with Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, whereby student employees in general qualify for exemption from paying the foreign country's income tax; in most cases, students are also allowed exemption from paying U.S. income tax on annual earnings abroad of less than \$3,000.00 per year.

### **Options for Experiential Education Employment Abroad.**

The most widely established form of experiential education employment abroad involves the student internship, in which American students are placed by the home institution in a full-time position abroad relating to the student's academic major. The internships, which are monitored and evaluated by faculty in the student's major department either independently or in cooperation with the home institution's career development office, usually involve full financial remuneration, are of six months or longer in duration, and may qualify for academic credit. During the period of the internship, students are formally guided and monitored by the employer, and close communication and articulation is maintained by the representatives of both the home institution and the employer. Procedures are established in advance of the employment for evaluation and measurement of the student's progress, in addition to occupational and language-related training activities undertaken by the student intern.

For those American colleges and universities which are interested in offering student internships abroad, yet lack either the resources and/or expertise to pursue implementation of such programs independently, it may be possible for the institution to consider formal affiliation with an institution, either domestic or foreign, which already has such programs in place and would consider a formal affiliation agreement (exceptions are cited below). Arrangements and costs vary by institution, and it would be necessary to contact such institutions individually to determine reciprocal interest, eligibility criteria, and space availability.

**Listing of American Colleges/  
Universities/Institutes Administering  
Internships in Austria, Germany,  
or Switzerland.**

**A. Austria**

1. The American University Center in Vienna/The American University, Washington, DC 20016: international studies.
2. Central College, Pella, IA 50219, in Vienna: international organizations, international business, political science, computer science, communications, history, philosophy, and teaching (second term only).
3. Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115; Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61761, in cooperation with Salzburg College: international communication, public relations (spring term only); international business, monetary theory, public relations (last four weeks of program only).
4. University of the Pacific, Sacramento, CA 95817; McGeorge School of Law in Salzburg: European law internships (October-December only).
5. Minnesota State University System, Minneapolis, MN 55455: international business institute summer program in Vienna.
6. American Institute of Musical Studies, Dallas, TX 75219: musical performance in Graz (July-August only).
7. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455: general internships (spring term).
8. University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL 33124: general internships in Innsbruck (one or more terms).
9. Institute of European Studies, Chicago, IL 60610: business internships/student teaching at Austrian high schools.
10. Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901: foreign language/international trade(3-6 months).

**B. Germany**

1. Albion College, Albion, MI 49224: general internships (January-July; own students only).
2. Ripon College, Ripon, WI 54971: general internships (one or more terms).
3. Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, TX 78666: general internships in Bonn/Cologne (one term only; own students only).
4. Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA 17013: general internships in Bremen (full term only).
5. Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO 80523: one term assignment for student teachers at U.S. Department of Defense schools.
6. Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA 16652: general internships (April-August).
7. University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881: engineering internships (full term).
8. American Graduate School of International Management, Glendale, AZ 85306: business internships in Östlich-Winkel (one or more terms; own students only).
9. Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN 46383: general internships in Reutlingen (one term only; own students only).
10. Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA 23005: general internships in Tübingen (one or more terms).
11. University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627: general internships in Bonn/Cologne, (one term only).
12. University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06269 (in cooperation with the Association for German-American Business and University Relations): internships with German-American companies.
13. Foothill College, Los Altos, CA 94022: general summer internships in Germany.
14. Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526: public service in Jena.
15. Millersville University, Millersville, PA 17551: internships in business (full term only).
16. School for International Training, Brattleboro, VT 05301: general internships in Tübingen (one term only).
17. University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06269 (in cooperation with the Fachhochschule Regensburg): general internships (full term only; own students only).
18. University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706 (in cooperation with the University of Bonn/Bundestag): internships for graduate students in political science, history, German, international business and international law (full term).
19. Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA 90263: internships in international business (full term only).

### C. Switzerland

1. Foothill College, Los Altos, CA 94022: general summer internships in Switzerland.

### **Listing of Colleges/Universities/Institutes in Austria, Germany, or Switzerland Administering Internships.**

#### A. Austria

1. Technische Universität Graz: technical internships.

#### B. Germany

1. Technische Universität Otto von Guericke Magdeburg: technical internships (one or more terms).
2. Universität Mannheim, Institut für Aufbaustudien: post-graduate internships in international economics (full term only).
3. Fachhochschule für Technik in Stuttgart: technical internships (one or more terms).
4. Universität des Saarlandes in Saarbrücken: general internships (one or more terms).
5. Postgraduate School of Administrative Sciences Speyer: administration internships (18 months only).
6. Universität/Gesamthochschule Kassel: general internships (one or more terms).
7. Humboldt Universität zu Berlin: students with three years of medical school (4–6 weeks duration).
8. Medizinische Akademie Magdeburg: for seniors/ health care professionals (summer session only).
9. Inter-Sprachschule Mannheim/Neustadt: language internships (summer session only).
10. Export-Akademie Baden-Württemberg in Reutlingen: post-graduate internships in international marketing (3 semesters).
11. Pädagogische Hochschule Zwickau: voluntary service (summer session only).
12. University of Bonn: 5-month internships at the German Bundestag (in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin, Madison).

### C. Switzerland

1. Swiss School of Hotel Management and Tourism in Chur: six month internships.

### **Alternative Employment Opportunities**

Guided by a strong conviction in the value of complementary forms of experiential education beyond formal internships alone, I initiated in 1976 a three credit hour 400-level practicum in German at Bradley University, the objective being to enable student participation in part-time/full-time employment abroad in diverse occupations not necessarily linked to their chosen major. Given program diversity, an individualized program of evaluation would be used to assess student development, often in conjunction with the student's daily journal (in German), whereby the student synthesizes and interprets experiences and insights relating to working in the German-speaking countries.

For those institutions which do not wish to make independent arrangements for such employment opportunities, resource agencies are available to assist with the implementation and oversight of the employment. The Council on International Educational Exchange, for example, offers summer work abroad opportunities for American college and university students in Germany. CIEE has negotiated agreements with the government of Germany, whereby temporary work permits are issued to American students enrolled in at least eight semester hours of credit during the semester immediately preceding the summer authorization period (May 15–October 15). It is the responsibility of the individual students, once having completed the CIEE orientation program in Bonn, to seek out their own job, with referral assistance and advisement provided by any of 100 different Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft offices throughout Germany. Students must provide their own transportation, and German language proficiency certification is required prior to approval of a work permit.

One of the major agencies for promotion of agency-supported international service activity is the Council on International Educational Exchange (205 E. 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017). CIEE offers participants opportunity to participate for up to three weeks in projects which benefit local communities. The students, who are advised to have good working knowledge of German, undertake a five-day, 40-hour per week community service ac-

tivity in exchange for room and board in group living arrangements. Germany has been one of CIEE's most supportive and active partners in this program. The largest international network for coordinating international voluntary service activities is Service Civil International (Innisfree Village, Rt. 2, Box 506, Crozet, VA 22232), which can be extremely helpful in setting up arrangements with sponsor agencies abroad for a wide variety of service activities.

Yet another option involves family helper (au pair) employment. The American Institute for Foreign Study (140 Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830), provides qualified American students with the opportunity to live as a member of a German-speaking family while assuming limited responsibility for child care and light housework in exchange for room, meals, and pocket money. Part-time positions are available in Salzburg, in which the students provide twenty hours of work per week in combination with study through AIFS at the University of Salzburg. A minimum of intermediate level German is required for participation, and the Austrian families have final decision on selection of the students. Full-time positions are available in Germany, in which students work 30 hours a week and are not required to attend classes.

A particularly useful resource for students seeking seasonal employment in either Germany, Switzerland, or Austria is the text *Working Holidays*, published by the U.K. Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges (Seymour Mews House, London W1H 9PE, England). For employment in Germany, the text lists thirteen international agencies (along with the addresses of the agencies and a brief prospectus of student eligibility requirements) which make arrangements for hiring American students to undertake employment in the areas of community service work, conservation, couriers and representatives, domestic work, farmwork, family helpers, and volunteer service activity; twenty-two agencies make arrangements in Austria for similar jobs, and twenty-eight agencies process applications for similar employment in Switzerland, including seasonal employment as language and sports teachers at resorts and camps.

### **Other U.S.-Based Informational Resource Agencies for Assisting with Student Employment in Germany, Switzerland, or Austria**

1. The Institute for International Cooperation and Development, P.O. Box 103, Williamstown, MA 10267.
2. Association for International Practical Training (AIPT), 10400 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 250, Columbia, MD 21044-3510.
3. Volunteers for Peace, Tiffany Rd., Belmont, Vermont 07530. (Volunteer service activities.)
4. U.S. Student Programs Division, Institute of International Education, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017-3580. (Also acts as liaison for Pädagogischer Austauschdienst teaching assistant program, to assist with the teaching of English language, American Studies, and American literature to German high school students. Candidates must not be over 30 years of age. Future teachers preferred.)
5. Cooperative Education Association, Inc., 11710 Beltsville Drive #520, Beltsville, MD 20705.
6. Experiment in International Living, 1540 Asbury Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15217. (Arranges for au pair/homestay abroad for periods of 3, 6, 9, 12 months in combination with language instruction in German.)
7. Institute of European Studies, 223 W. Ohio St., Chicago, IL 60610. (One or more terms; general internships.)
8. International Christian Youth Exchange, Outbound Program, 134 W. 26th Street #400, New York, NY 10001. (Volunteer service activities.)
9. Educational Programmes Abroad, 2815 Sables Drive, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. (Arranges affiliation agreements or partnership agreements with European institutions. Available assignments at the German Bundestag, national parliaments, the European parliament, museums, galleries, urban planning offices, social services agencies, health care agencies, businesses, and educational institutions.)
10. CDS International, 330 Seventh Avenue, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10001. (Graduate degree or work experience required. Programs in political science, economics, law, business administration, public affairs, journalism, and mass communication. CDS also

administers the Robert Bosch Foundation internship program and the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Internships for young professionals.)

11. Emigré Memorial German Internship Programs (for advanced undergraduate/graduate students in administration and public policy studies), P.O. Box 345, Durham, NH 03824.
12. German American Chamber of Commerce, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103.
13. The National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, 3509 Haworth Drive #207, Raleigh, NC 27609.
14. International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience, 213 American City Bldg., Columbia, MD 21044.
15. The Association for German-American Business and University Relations, 9 Eastwood Road, Storrs, CT 06268 (business internships).
16. The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 11 Dupont Circle N.W., Suite 750, Washington, DC. 20036. (Three internships: two at the Washington, DC, office and one at office of the Atlantik-Brücke in areas relating to the fund's programs.)
17. The Partnership for Service Learning, 815 Second Avenue #315, New York, NY 10017.
18. Current Jobs International, P.O. Box 40550, 5136 MacArthur Blvd., NW, Washington, DC 20016.

**Resource Agencies in Either Austria, Germany or Switzerland for Assisting with Student Employment Abroad**

*A. Austria*

1. Service Civil International, Schottengasse 3a, A-1010 Wien.
2. Austrian Foreign Students Service, Rooseveltplatz 13, A-1090 Wien.
3. Austrian Committee for International Education Exchange, Türkenstraße 4, A-1090 Wien.
4. Austrian-American Educational Commission, Schmidgasse 14, A-1082 Wien.
5. Austro-American Institute of Education, Operngasse 4, A-1010 Wien.
6. Auslandsstudentendienst der Österreichischen Hochschülerschaft, Führichgasse 10,

A-1010 Wien.

7. Arbeitsamt für Studenten und Jugendliche, Esteplatz 2, A-1010 Wien.
8. The Embassy of Austria, 3524 International Court N.W., Washington, DC 20008-3035.
9. Fulbright Commission/Austrian-American Educational Commission, Schmidgasse 14, A-1082 Wien.

*B. Germany*

1. Service Civil International, Blücherstraße 14, D-53115 Bonn 1.
2. Zentralstelle für Arbeitsvermittlung der Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, Feuerbachstraße 42-46, D-60325 Frankfurt am Main 1.
3. Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft e.V. Ausbilderreferat, Postfach 19 03 25, Hohenstaufenring 30-33, D-50674 Köln 1.
4. The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 4645 Reservoir Rd. N.W., Washington, DC 20007-1998.
5. Informationsbüro für deutsch-amerikanischen Austausch, Hüttenweg 7, D-14195 Berlin 33.
6. Koordinierungsstelle für Praxissemester der Fachhochschulen, Moltkestraße 4, Postfach 2440, D-76133 Karlsruhe 1.
7. Deutscher Bauernverband e.V. Internationaler Praktikantenaustausch, Godesberger Allee 142-48, D-53115 Bonn 1.
8. DAAD (in cooperation with the International Association for Exchange of Students for Technical Experience): engineering and natural science internships (July-October). 950 3rd Avenue, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10022.

*C. Switzerland*

1. The Embassy of Switzerland, 2900 Cathedral Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20008.
2. Service Civil International (Workcamps) Postfach 228, CH-3000 Bern 9.
3. Youth and Student Information, Swiss Student Travel Office, SSR Reisen, Bäckerstraße 40, CH-8026 Zürich (for volunteer service activities).
4. Bundesamt für Bildung und Wissenschaft, Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern, Bildungs-und-Stipendienwesen, Wildhainweg

- 9, Postfach 5675, CH-3001 Bern.  
5. BIGHA, Sektion Auswanderung und Stagiaries, Bundesgasse 8, CH-3003 Bern.

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### Conclusion

Given the fact that Germany ranks sixth, Austria seventh, and Switzerland twelfth in the countries of the world which enrolled American higher education students as of 1990 (Zikopoulos 1991, 85), it makes sense to assume that American student enthusiasm for experiences in the German-speaking countries could be extended effectively to the area of experiential education employment as well. Such opportunities, if carefully structured and overseen by faculty and career development specialists from the U.S. institution, could effectively complement the academic experience of our study abroad students, thereby optimizing the total overseas human development experience. Although experiential education employment abroad is still far from the established norm, such nontraditional avenues to promoting international/global education will undoubtedly continue to grow as we gain more experience with them and the necessary support is provided to enable further program development.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>DeKeyser has observed that the impact of the "semester abroad" on foreign language skill enhancement still remains inconclusive. See Robert DeKeyser, "The Semester Overseas: What Difference Does It Make?" *ADFL Bulletin* 22.2 (1991): 42-48.

<sup>2</sup>For a much more detailed presentation of issues to be considered in this early implementation stage, see John Grandin, "Developing Internships in Germany for International Engineering Students," *Die Unterrichtspraxis* 24.2 (1991): 209-14.

<sup>3</sup>I wish to express my appreciation to the following individuals for information used in this phase of the research: Hartwig Prüssmann, Education Programs Abroad; Professor Ruth Gunden, Goshen College; Professor Diana E. Bartley, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee; R. Hartmut Holzmüller, Institut für Absatzwirtschaft, Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien; Jill S. Fischer, The Global Campus, Institute of International Studies and Programs, The University of Minnesota; Natalie Laing, CDS International; Leo Van Cleve, Central College; W. Eric McElwain, University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law; Dr. L. Sharon Blocker, Colorado State University; Professor Eugene Timpe, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and D. Killman, Universität des Saarlandes. I am also indebted to statistical data provided by the Institute of International Education, UNESCO, the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges (London, England), and the Council for International Educational Exchange, as well as informational materials provided by the embassies of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland.

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