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UQ Student Employability Centre / UQ Global Engagement

UQ LATIN AMERICAN EMBASSY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPANTS

employability.uq.edu.au/uq-latin-american-embassy-program

Jack Fuller
Parliament House, Canberra

UQ LATIN AMERICAN EMBASSY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The UQ Latin American Embassy Internship Program represents a fantastic opportunity for students who have an interest in Latin American culture and society, diplomacy, international relations and business.

There are two internship rounds available each year, over the mid-year and end of year breaks. Internships are completed on a voluntary basis. The UQ Student Employability Centre awards successful students a grant to assist with costs associated with participating in the experience.

The information provided in this document is designed to assist participants in preparing for their internship in Canberra, ACT.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Pre Departure

Prior to your internship, the UQ Student Employability Centre will invite you to attend a pre-departure get-together. This will give you the opportunity to meet the other interns participating at the same time as you, ask UQ Student Employability Centre and Global Engagement staff any questions you may have before your departure, and we will invite some past interns so that you have the chance to find out more about their experience too.

Representing UQ

As you will be acting as a representative of The University of Queensland in Canberra, please take the time to read the UQ Student Charter, which outlines professional expectations and responsibilities in relation to respect, privacy, equity and diversity. The Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Checklist is another helpful document that we ask you to review before the program commencement.



Canberra has high accommodation costs, especially as a short term visitor.

MICHELLE HAYES
Embassy of El Salvador

Contacting your supervisor

A few weeks prior to your departure to Canberra, we suggest you write to your supervisor to formally introduce yourself and confirm details with them of your arrival. In this email we suggest:

1. Introduce yourself, provide a brief overview of your interest in the program and what you hope to get out of the internship.
2. Confirm with the embassy your arrival and departure dates and times.
3. Ask what time you are expected to arrive on your first day.
4. Ask if you are required to bring any materials such as a laptop.

Travel arrangements

Please remember that you are responsible for organising your own travel and accommodation. The grant allocated by the UQ Student Employability Centre is designed to assist with these costs, however interns should expect to cover some costs independently.

Getting to Canberra- you can choose how you would like to travel to Canberra. Most previous interns have flown to Canberra for the internship, but some have also driven. UQ has several travel agents on campus that can assist with your bookings, should you require assistance.

Getting around Canberra- Public transport in Canberra is available, but can be limited. Visit the ACT Transport website to see what's available to and from your embassy. In the past, some UQ students have driven to Canberra and found that having a car while in Canberra is helpful in getting to and from the embassy each day.

Accommodation in Canberra- You may find that hotel or apartment accommodation could be expensive in Canberra for the internship period. We suggest contacting some local universities to check on college accommodation, www.airbnb.com or www.stayz.com. We also suggest you could contact the other UQ students participating in the program and consider group accommodation.



Canberra also has a lot of cool sights, like the War Memorial and National Gallery, and they are definitely worth exploring. However, public transport isn't the best in Canberra so I'd recommend researching transport options before choosing accommodation.

NIA ROBERTS
Embassy of Mexico



Do it! Canberra is an awesome city. Work hard and say yes to everything, including extra-curricular activities. I now have practical skills, along with an improved level of Spanish and the ability to be malleable to the demands of diplomatic life. Canberra also has a lot to offer outside an embassy so make sure you take advantage of seeing the sights.

JACK FULLER



I highly recommend driving to Canberra - of the five students who undertook the program, only two of us drove to the ACT from Brisbane. Yes, it may seem like a long drive down there, but I was so thankful to have a car to travel around. It was a 40km round trip to the Embassy each day and only took me 20mins each way. I know some of the other students struggled with public transport - it often took up to an hour and a half to arrive at their Embassies each day. Public transport in Canberra isn't the best!

GEORGINA WILKINSON
Embassy of Cuba

RESEARCH AND PREPERATION

We would encourage you undertake research on your Embassy in Australia and your host country before commencing your internship. This will enable you to make the most of the opportunity and contribute to activities as much as possible.

Understanding Latin American business culture

While the Embassies are based in Canberra, diplomatic missions are based on 'foreign soil' and interns will be expected to operate within the context of Latin American workplace.

To maximise the opportunity, a basic understanding of the culture of the specific country is extremely important. It will demonstrate respect and the desire to learn more during your internship.

Although in Australia we commonly refer to the region as Latin America, it is important to remember that although the culture is similar each Latin American country will have subtle cultural differences. In the same way that European culture will vary from one country to another.

Learn from other students experiences

If you haven't done so already, please review the student stories page which includes information on common challenges and advice from previous participants.

Practice your Spanish

Practising your Spanish before commencing your internship is strongly recommended.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN CANBERRA

Arrange a meeting with your supervisor

We recommend arranging a meeting with your supervisor at the commencement of your internship to discuss the duties and expectations of your role. Tasks will vary between embassies and it's great to be open and flexible with these tasks. In general, you can expect that your duties may include general office administration, executive support to the Ambassador, consular services, translation, event coordination and liaison with other Latin American embassies.

This program will provide you with access to unique networking opportunities.

Business etiquette and internship duties

The dress code for the duration of the program is business attire, unless otherwise advised by your supervisor.

Illness and absence

While the placement is a volunteer role, interns are expected to arrive on time each day. If you are unwell and unable to participate during your placement, please contact your supervisor to advise them.



Approach the internship with an open mind, even when things may seem a little difficult. You can learn so much about the Embassy and its culture if you do! If you don't understand something, don't feel embarrassed. Embassy staff are aware that Spanish is your second language and are more than happy to help you out. It is definitely helpful to practise your Spanish before going, however you shouldn't let your confidence in Spanish impact how you interact with others. The more you practice, the more you'll get out of the experience.

NIA ROBERTS
Embassy of Mexico

Questions and support

At any time during your internship please feel free to contact us with any questions. We would like to hear how your experience is going. If you have any concerns about your tasks or volunteer placement, while we encourage you to speak to your supervisor in the first instance the UQ Student Employability Centre is happy help facilitate a conversation with your embassy if you are uncomfortable doing so.

Please direct any questions to the UQ Student Employability Centre:

E: employability@uq.edu.au or
T: (07) 3365 2929



Always ask for tasks that allow an insight into the diplomatic world and the functioning of the embassy, otherwise one can get stuck with work that is not necessarily beneficial for oneself. Also, request to participate in any event or meeting that is happening. It will not always be possible to attend as an intern (due to confidentiality), but these events are usually occasion one can learn the most.

MYRIAM WARMERS
Embassy of Uruguay

WHEN YOU RETURN HOME

When you return, you will be required to share your feedback and experience with the UQ Student Employability Centre. As a condition of your internship, we ask that you complete an activity report within four weeks of returning. We also encourage you to take some high resolution photos while on your internship, which we would like to use for promotional purposes to encourage others.



This experience reassured me in my ambition to work in an international context. Furthermore, it allowed me to put some of the tools adquired during the first year of my Master program to practical use. In terms of my professional development, it strenghtened my confidence to interact and engage professionally in two foreign languages.

Be proactive and approach co-workers or supervisors directly if you would like to participate in events, conferences or receptions you might not be scheduled for. Given the short duration of the internship, it is important to make the most out of every opportunity that presents itself.

LARS GOTTSCHALK
Embassy of Cuba



I had the opportunity to learn how diplomacy works in practice, which will be very helpful for my future career in international affairs .

My Spanish has improved significantly, I learned a lot about diplomatic protocol.

Participating at the diplomatic networking event and getting to know people from so many different countries was pretty special.

AMANDA SOUZA E SILVA
Embassy of Ecuador



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NIA ROBERTS
Embassy of Mexico