International Work Placements: some things to consider

Undertaking a work placement overseas can result in increased self-confidence and greater awareness of other cultures and work practices. It enables you to be better equipped to work in a competitive, global economy.

However, overseas placements will require more planning, will be financially more expensive and can be more challenging than a UK-based placement.

Consider the following factors when deciding to apply for a placement overseas

Financial factors

Prior to applying for a placement overseas it is advisable to spend some time working out whether you can really afford to go overseas.

You will need to pay for:

- flights / transport to your host country
- insurance (travel, medical and personal belongings)
- embassy and visa fees
- **Cost of living**: Investigate the cost of living in the country you intend to go to.
- **Credit cards**: If you are planning on using your credit card during the year, check it is accepted in the country you are visiting - in some countries you may not be able to use any credit cards
- **Accommodation**: You will need to have funds to pay for your first month’s accommodation and deposit.
- **Cash / travellers cheques**: You will need access to cash to tide you over until you get your first pay cheque.
- **Salary**: Placements overseas can pay significantly less than placements in the UK so make sure you have the salary confirmed in writing before you book flights, pay for insurance etc.

Placements in the EU

- Funding is available if you are undertaking an overseas work placement in the EU. Erasmus funding is available to help with the cost of the placement, covering travel expenses, living expenses, insurance and a contribution towards the cost of language tuition. In addition, under the Erasmus scheme, tuition fees for the placement year are waived.
To find out if you are eligible to apply for funding and further information email: Erasmus@sheffield.ac.uk

Social factors

- You will be spending one year living and working in another culture with different customs and etiquette. It is important to research the country and area you will be going to live and work in before applying for a placement there.
- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office can provide country specific advice on their website and it is also a good idea to visit the website of the embassy of the country you plan to work in.
- Be aware of the local laws and customs.

Medical issues

- Order prescriptions for any existing medical conditions before you depart.
- Take a well-equipped First Aid Kit.
- Find out what vaccinations are needed and if you need to take malaria medication.
- Have a dental check-up prior to departing.

Language

- Will you need to be able to speak another language in order to carry out your placement? What level of fluency is required?
- Prospects - offers country specific information for over 50 countries and covers the levels of fluency you will need to work in that country.
- The Modern Languages Teaching Centre offers a wide range of modules from beginner to advanced level in Arabic, French, German, Italian, Latin and Spanish.
- If you are going on placement to a country in the EU, funding is available and can help cover the cost of language classes to help you prepare for your placement.
- It is advisable to be completely honest with any potential employers regarding your level of fluency when applying for placements.

You can find out a wealth of information on all of these issues in relation to the country you have chosen to undertake a work placement in by visiting the Going Global website which is accessible via the Careers Service webpages. Going Global provides up to date information on