Many students dream of working abroad. It sounds exciting and is a great way to prepare for further international work. But, is it right for you?

Evaluate your personal goals, resources and skills in light of these realities:

- It will take time and effort to identify the right opportunity for you.
- To legally work abroad, you will need a special visa. Visas are obtained from the Embassy or Consulate of the country of destination.
- Don’t expect to make a lot of money. Often, you will pay fees to participate in international programs. When paid, salaries may not be as high as in the U.S. You gain experience rather than money.

Still interested? Numerous international opportunities fall into four general categories: Internship, Volunteer, Short-Term Paid Work and Teaching English.

**International Internship**

Internships abroad generally directly relate to an international career goal, but are often unpaid.

- Study Abroad Office at the University of Illinois (studyabroad.illinois.edu) offers study abroad internships that generally include academic coursework, offer college credit and charge tuition.
- AIESEC (aiesec.org), a student-run international internship exchange program, arranges paid internships in applied fields. The local chapter of AIESEC (aiesecillinois.com) offers leadership experiences, international opportunities and a global learning environment.
- Cultural Vista (culturalvistas.org) coordinates international exchange experiences.

**Volunteer Abroad**

Volunteer programs strive to meet needs within certain countries. A huge range of opportunities exist in many different countries and can be as short as a few weeks or as long as two years. Often volunteers work alongside local citizens.

- Peace Corps (peacecorps.gov) provides a two-year experience with stipend. Contact the local campus Peace Corp representative for more information (careercenter.illinois.edu/resources/campus/peacecorps).
- Idealist’s International Volunteerism Resource Center (Idealist.org) provides resources to help make informed decisions about volunteering in another country.
- Volunteers for Peace (vfp.org) offers short-term international volunteer service programs.

**Short-Term Paid Work Abroad**

These jobs typically include restaurant work, child care or farm work that last a few months to one year.

- BUNAC (bunac.org) is a popular work exchange organization that arranges work permits and offers job search assistance. Available to current students and recent grads, BUNAC offers work in Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and volunteer experiences in South Africa and Peru.
Teaching English Abroad

Teaching English in a foreign country as an international language can be an accessible avenue for working overseas. Often, a bachelor’s degree and being a native English speaker are all that is required. Formal ESL credentials may not be required for all opportunities, but often open doors to positions in tighter markets. Opportunities generally require a one-year commitment though shorter programs are available as well.

**JET (jetprogramme.org)** is a well-established one-year program that recruits assistant language teachers to provide English instruction in elementary and secondary schools in Japan.

**Dave’s ESL Cafe (eslcafe.com)** is “the Internet’s meeting place for ESL & EFL teachers and students…”

**Fulbright Program for U.S. Students (us.fulbrightonline.org)** offers English Teaching Assistantships worldwide.

**Department of Linguistics at Illinois (linguistics.illinois.edu/students/certificate/)** offers TESL certificate and ESL endorsement programs.

Choosing The Best For You

International programs help students arrange their international experiences. They usually offer assistance in obtaining placements and visas, as well as providing orientation and support. If you decide to join any of them, you may contact a local or nearby office to arrange these details on your own. When deciding, consider the following questions:

- Do you desire/need academic credit?
- How long do you want to be overseas?
- What do you want to do or focus on while you are there?
- What are requirements to participate in this program?
- What are the costs? How will you afford them?

Other Online Resources

Good places to start with:

**Study Abroad: The University of Illinois** ([www.studyabroad.illinois.edu](http://www.studyabroad.illinois.edu)) - Information about options for studying, working or traveling abroad for students

**Transitions Abroad** ([transitionsabroad.com](http://transitionsabroad.com)) - Portal for work and study abroad, cultural travel and international living

**Go Abroad** ([goabroad.com](http://goabroad.com)) - Comprehensive resource for international education and experiential travel

**Study Abroad** ([studyabroad.com](http://studyabroad.com)) - Online directories of international study abroad, internship, service learning and volunteer programs

Before you commit to a particular program, you will want to understand it thoroughly. Talking with former participants, reading participant reports on Transitions Abroad, researching online, and asking very specific questions can help you get the information you need to evaluate a program.

Plan ahead! Start early! There are many details to consider in selecting a program and preparing to go overseas.

Please note: This list of information and websites are provided for those who are interested in overseas experiences to look up resources and does not endorse any off-campus program or business. Be sure to do your research!