CAFCE International Committee

Student Engagement Sub-Group

Draft Questions for Student Profiles

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Where did you work abroad (city, country): United Arab Emirates, Sharjah

When did you go abroad: May-August 2010

Which work term (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc..):

1. **What motivated you to seek out an international work term?**

* I wanted to learn about how the work environment in HR rules and regulations differs in other countries
* Understand some of the roles and procedures that employees need to follow in the country
* My friends and family, who live in UAE, encouraged me to do my co-op position in the country. They gave me a general knowledge on most companies on the HR department, and what most companies expect from the HR department

1. **How did you fund the travel and other costs associated with this opportunity?**

* My parents helped me out with some of the associated cost that I needed for this opportunity
* I was able to stay for four months at my relatives house, thus saving money from rent

1. **Can you tell me what steps you took to secure your co-op position? Did you feel it was hard to secure your co-op position and how would you advise other students to make the same effort?**

* Since the work environment in UAE differs from Canada, it was hard to adapt to the rules and policies that the HR department follows and implement

However, as time passed by I was able to learn from my manager some of the key issues about HR; made it easier for me to do my job

* I would advise other students to ask questions when needed in order to develop the knowledge and skill that is required
* This could help the student to broaden their knowledge and be more creative in their jobs

1. **When conducting your job search did you find that many of the jobs available were in specific sectors? (ie: corporate, non-profit, government, etc.) Where, or how, would you suggest other students focus their search?**

* It was not easy to find a job in UAE because the UAE’s economy was still suffering from the 2009 economy crash
* I was able to find this job through a relative; I had to meet with HR manager as soon as I got to Dubai
* The best way to find a job in UAE is through internet. Even though results might be board, it can still help the student to find a job based on his/her qualifications
* Students who are looking for jobs in the Middle East can visit sites like naukrigulf (similar to workopolis). This site help students to find jobs that are related to their field

1. **Tell me about the cost of living in (city or country). How did your expenses compare to your income based on the salary you were earning? Were you able to save any money and where did you find savings or discounts which reduced your expenses?**

* UAE is very expensive to live in. Renting an apartment, car, and even grocery shopping can be costly to purchase
* My summer co-op position in UAE was volunteer, which is why I had to stay with my relatives because I could not afford to rent an apartment
* My parents helped me out with some of the associated cost that I needed for this opportunity

1. **How did you find accommodations and what rent can you expect to pay in (city or country)?**

* I was able to live with my relatives since it is expensive to rent an apartment in Sharjah for four months
* I had to take a taxi everyday to work since it is faster and cheaper
* Other associate cost was paid by my parents, since it was a volunteer co-op position

1. **What, if any, cultural barriers did you have to overcome and what were some of these challenges?**

* I did not have any cultural barriers because I have lived in the country for 10 years
* I know how to speak Arabic and English fluently
* Friends and family helped me with some of the rules and policies that most companies adapt and implement
* Knew some of the roles and procedures of HR before working in Invest Bank and United Arab Bank

1. **Did you find it difficult to meet new people? What steps did you take to integrate yourself into your new surroundings and make yourself more comfortable in a new setting?**

* No, because I had to work on the employee handbook which helped me meets different managers in short period of time
* It was easy for me to communicate with all employees since they knew how to speak in English and Arabic
* Most employees were friendly and helpful
* Multicultural environment in United Arab Bank

1. **Overall, what advice would you give co-op students who are seeking international opportunities?**

* Yes I would advise co-op students to seek international opportunities because it will allow them to gain more knowledge in their field and help them in their futures career
* Help students to interact with t employees from different background; can help limit the barriers between employees

1. **Is there anything else you want us to know about your experience?**

* I encourage students to do their co-op position outside Canada because they can gain so much knowledge from their field.
* Help them to work with different people from different background
* It is a fun experience