



## Guidelines for Internships

Accès Study Abroad can help a limited number of qualified students arrange internships each semester at government agencies, non-profit organizations or businesses in Strasbourg. Students may receive 4 academic credits if they successfully complete the internship program and obtain approval from their academic advisor at their US college. Internships generally last for 10-12 weeks (early October through mid-December or mid February through mid-May). Students must work on the internship site for at least 96 hours per semester.

### **I. Procedure for consideration :**

- a. When the student applies to Accès, he or she must submit
  - documentation from French language professor that he or she has upper-intermediate level French (at least B2 on CEFR scale)
  - a character reference along with Accès application
  - a c.v. in French which includes areas of interest and specific types of internship that the student would like to undertake, as well as any related previous experience.
- b. Once these documents are submitted, the Accès director edits the c.v. for language and structure and discusses the internship project with the student. The Accès director then identifies one or more possible internship host organizations in Strasbourg and sends the contact information to the student.
- c. The student makes an initial contact with the potential internship host organizations asking for an interview. If the organization is favorable to hosting an intern, the Accès director follows up to explain the academic portion of the project and the MOU.
- d. After arriving in France, the student and the Accès director visit the internship host organization for an interview. It is imperative that this meeting take place within the first 2 weeks of the semester, before the end of the university drop-add period.
- e. If all goes well at the interview, Accès, the student and the host organization sign a MOU (convention de stage) and the student begins the internship.

### **II. Internship responsibilities**

The internship is first and foremost an opportunity for student learning. It must be considered as such by the student and by the internship supervisor. The internship is not paid, although in certain cases, the host organization may provide in-kind benefits such as transportation or meals.

The host organization has the final word in whether or not to take on an intern. Generally, the host organization makes its decision close to the time the internship would start and after meeting with the student. Therefore, Accès cannot guarantee students placement at an internship before they arrive in France. For this reason, students must take a full load of courses at the university (at least 12 credits) in case the internship does not materialize.

During the first three to four weeks of the internship, the student will observe the different types of work which is performed at the host organization. Although there may be some menial jobs (photocopies, cleaning, making coffee), the student should primarily be engaged in substantive activities directly related to the mission of the host organization. The student's goal during these first few weeks is to learn as much as possible about how the organization functions so as to be able to develop a "problématique" to study during the rest of the internship

After the first three or four weeks, the student meets with the Accès director to elaborate a "problématique" or research question related to the internship. The "problématique" should be broad enough to be of general interest, but specific enough so that the student can find useful answers through his or her internship experience. For example, "How do the French understand culture?" is far too broad. "How does the Strasbourg museum of modern art receive its funding" is too specific. "How are art museums funded in France: a case study" is much better.

Once the student and the Accès director have agreed on an appropriate "problématique", they will meet with the internship director. This is a chance for all parties to express their concerns and questions about the experience so far, and to set objectives for the rest of the internship.

Two to three weeks before the end of the semester, the student presents a "soutenance" of his or her work. This is a brief 10-minute presentation to the Accès director, the internship director and other Accès students in which he or she explains:

- the pertinence of the "problématique"
- the internship as a source of information about the "problématique"
- the method of research and resources used.
- preliminary results

By the end of the semester, the student submits a 12-15-page "mémoire" which consists of the following sections:

- introduction (2 pages), definition of the subject of study and the "problématique", overview of the structure of the "mémoire"
- context chapter (2-3 pages): general explanation of the subject of study, drawing on readings you have done. Be sure to define all your terms. What are the main ways in which other people have looked at this subject? How will your mémoire contribute?
- methodology chapter (2-3 pages): presentation of the internship site as an indicator related to the subject of study. Overview of the type of observations conducted
- your observations (4-8 pages) divide into as many chapters as is necessary. This section should not be a compilation of everything you saw or did as part of your internship. Rather it should give specific indicators which will be useful in answering the "problématique".

- conclusion (2 pages) your answers to the "problématique", possible areas of further study

### **III. Credits and evaluation**

The internship itself does not bear any credit. However, students may earn 4 credits for their research related to the internship. 25% of the final grade is based on the "soutenance" and 75% is based on the "mémoire". Along with the final "mémoire", students must submit a detailed list of the hours they worked at the internship, signed by the internship supervisor. The mémoire and the soutenance are graded by the Accès director in consultation with the internship director.