

**Orientation Sheet – Internship in Germany - GUC Students**

Intention and Target Group

This sheet shall provide an overview for GUC students planning to do an internship in Germany. Please also read the Orientation Sheet 1 - GUC Students – Long Term Stay in Germany.

**General Information**

Your preparations for an internship in Germany should start as early as possible, but at least 9 months in advance. This way you and your (hopefully future) employer have enough time for all the additional paperwork that is required from non-EU citizens who want to work or do an internship in Germany.

Before you start concrete preparations, it is recommendable that you do some basic considerations.

* Doing an internship in Germany will probably cost you more money than an internship in Egypt. Monthly living costs for a student in Germany are around 700 Euro per month and this does not include expenses like travel, furnishing a flat, rent deposit for a flat, shopping for clothes or dining out.
* Kindly note that many companies and institutes do not pay any remuneration for interns. Please make sure that you clarify that point with your employer before you come to Germany.
* Doing an internship in Germany will require that you act very independently while you are there. You might live alone, have to get along in a new city by yourself, meet and deal with people who might have a very different cultural background.
* Living and working in Germany generally requires a lot of paperwork to be completed, e.g. for your employer, the federal employment agency (ZAV), insurance companies (health insurance is compulsory in Germany), foreigners’ registration office (for your residence permit) and the tax authorities (in case you receive a remuneration for your internship).
* Many companies in Germany prefer interns that stay at least for six months.
* Not all companies offer English speaking internship opportunities and not everybody might be able to speak English in your internship company.
* Depending on your area of study there might be quite a competition for interesting internship opportunities. Most German study programs contain compulsory internship phases, so there are a lot of German students looking for internships as well.

Please don’t feel discouraged by these paragraphs; many GUC students already managed to get very interesting internships in Germany. It is just important that you are fully aware of the additional effort it will take to do your internship in Germany.

The GUC German Office (guc@uni-ulm.de) is happy to help you out with advice and support before and during your stay in Germany.

**However, we do not directly arrange internship opportunities with German companies or institutes.**

**Finding an internship opportunity**

First of all, you need to define which sector or branch is interesting for you, and then think about if you prefer to work in a big or rather small company. The famous names may sound good on your CV, but smaller companies often offer very interesting opportunities. Once you defined all that you can start searching. May be your academic advisor knows something, or fellow students. Or course, many companies publish their vacant internship positions online. Most of the websites are in German, the key word for “internship” is “Praktikum”.

* www.praktikant24.de
* www.monster.de
* www.xing.com/Praktikum (you will have to register, but it is for free)
* www.stepstone.de
* www.karriere.unicum.de/praktikum/
* www.karriere.de/stellenmarkt/
* www.ingenieurkarriere.de/ (for engineers)
* www.thelocal.de/jobs/ (English)
* www.jobs.expatica.com/germany/home.html (English)

**Applying for an internship**

Please refer to the “Students’ Internship Manual” published by GUC SCAD Office. You will probably apply online or via email. These links might help you creating a successful application:

* www.cvtips.com/career-choice/simple-steps-for-a-successful-email-jobapplication.html
* www.tle.westone.wa.gov.au/live/file/e8752850-631a-220c-c33ec069432b62f4/1/cgea\_preview\_job\_applications.zip/job\_applications/docs/eg\_goo d\_jobemail.pdf
* www.cvcl.co.uk/blog/job-applications/applying-for-a-job-by-email/
* www.wikijob.co.uk/wiki/email-job-applications

**Dealing with the German work culture**

The following paragraphs are based on: Sylvia Schroll-Machl: Understanding German Business Culture

http://www.expatica.com/de/essentials\_moving\_to/essentials/workingwith-the-germans-focus-on-the-task-at-hand-23880\_10093.html

DESCRIBING GERMAN CULTURAL STANDARDS

The most important German cultural standards are:

Focus on the task

The task is the central and dominant issue in all business interactions and also determines the style of communication. The relationship level assumes a more subordinate role in professional life. Germans usually think that operating at the task level should form the basis of all business contacts. The next cultural standard is closely related to this aspect.

Value of structures and rules

In German companies, there are countless rules, regulations, procedures and processes. German business people prefer contracts and written agreements of all types. The existence of these things and their tight and consistent application, the adherence to them and the rigid consequences, or even penalties, for not complying with them are in stark contrast to other cultures. On the one hand, this underscores a consistency and high degree of mutual obligation. On the other hand, this principle leaves little room for flexibility and individual determination.

German punctuality (time-planning)

The approaches described above have a strong impact on the relationship with regard to time. Appointments are precisely planned and it is expected that times which are set are adhered to. Punctuality is a matter of good manners.

Separation of private and public spheres

Germans exercise a strict separation between the various spheres of their life. They clearly vary their behaviour with other people depending on the sphere of their life (private or business) in which they have contact with an individual as well as the closeness of the relationship (business partner or friend). This frequently leads to Germans in business or public life being seen by members of other cultures as very remote and cold and even as overtly unfriendly.

Directness of communication

Germans communicate very directly and explicitly. They formulate important statements directly and openly and without 'window dressing'. They can appear rude and threatening without meaning to or even noticing it. In return, they do not easily recognise and respond to verbal subtleties such as indirect hints, messages 'between the lines' and many nonverbal signals. They can therefore often miss the decisive content of an interaction.

Culturally-specific behaviour can be explained on the basis of cultural standards. This can aid in understanding what would otherwise be irritating, unusual and strange events. This knowledge is therefore an important basis for constructive cooperation between members of different cultures.

**During Your Internship**

Please find below a few guidelines/questions that might help you while you do your internship:

* Do you know your supervisor in the company? If no, please find out who it is and introduce yourself, ideally before you start your internship.
* Did you talk with your supervisor about your expectations and the expectations of his/her company concerning your internship?
* Did you think about what you will be doing during your internship? If you will have a certain project did you draft a plan for the work steps that will be necessary to implement it?
* Once you have an outline, try to discuss it with your supervisor. At the same time show some flexibility, he/she will surely appreciate if you have made an outline, but may have other priorities for you to work on first.

Please keep in mind some general cultural differences.

* Usually, a personal conversation is given priority over phone calls in Germany. That means that whenever you are in a conversation (meeting, briefing, lecture, lab work…) and you receive a mobile phone call, German partners will expect that you stay in the personal conversation and answer the phone call sometime later. Accepting a phone call in the middle of a personal conversation is considered to be rude (unless it’s a really important call…).
* Be on time!
* Keep time, e.g. know the working and office hours of your company. Call colleagues after working hours or during the weekend on their mobile phone only in really important cases or if they explicitly offered you to do so.

**Legal Issues**

For information about the official papers needed to do an internship in Germany please refer to our information sheet “internship regulations”. For more details on legal matters this website is quite helpful: http://www.lg2g.info/.

Please don’t hesitate to contact the GUC German Office during your preparations and your stay in Germany (guc@uni-ulm.de).

**Good Luck!**

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