U.S. Department of State
Student Internship Program
Tips for Navigating the Application and Preparing a Competitive Application

Step 1: The Basics

In order to apply for the U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program, you must:

- Have an account and password on usajobs.gov. Applicants new to USAJOBS must create an applicant profile.

- Build a USAJOBS resume using resume builder. Make sure to include all of the relevant information you believe will be of interest to the Bureau(s)/Offices(s) you have selected. Attaching a personal resume to your USAJOBS profile is not sufficient. If you choose to upload a resume in addition, there is no need to keep it to one-page.

- Complete the Internship Application on-line questionnaire, including a Statement of Interest.

- Have a copy of your transcript ready to upload. Applications received without required documents are automatically disqualified for consideration.

Step 2: Read the Announcement and Brochure Thoroughly

Read the announcement carefully from beginning to end. You can access it at this website:

U.S. Department of State Fall 2016 Internship Announcement (expires March 1, 2016)

Download the brochure and review it, bearing in mind that some of the information regarding placement options may be out of date:

Student Internship Program Brochure

Step 3: Understand the Structure of the Application

There are three parts to the application process:

- Applicant Profile (for applicants new to USAJOBS)
- Internship Application, including your Statement of Interest
- Required Documents – Official Transcripts

The application consists of 27 primary questions, along with a number of branched questions, some of which you may be asked to answer depending on your answers to the primary questions.

Note that the “branched questions” are only presented after you have answered “Yes” to question 27, certifying that “all the information provided in this application is true, correct, complete and made in good faith.”
To understand how this all fits together, you may wish to preview the questions in the Internship Application by clicking on the link marked “Preview the questions” in the announcement under the section “HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED” or clicking on this link:

[Preview questions for the fall 2016 Student Internship Program](#) (expires March 1, 2016)

**Step 4: Selecting a First and Second Choice for Placement**

The key feature of the Student Internship Program is that applicants themselves decide where they would like to intern by selecting a first and second choice for placement from the list of bureaus and offices listed below within the U.S. Department of State.

U.S. embassies and consulates are associated with one of six different geographic bureaus (AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA, and WHA), and U.S. missions to international organizations overseas are associated with the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO).

- A Bureau of Administration
- AF Bureau of African Affairs
- AVC Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance
- CA Bureau of Consular Affairs
- CGFS Bureau of the Comptroller and Financial Services
- CSO Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations
- DRL Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
- DS Bureau of Diplomatic Security
- EAP Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
- EB Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs
- ECA Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
- eDIP Office of eDiplomacy
- ENR Bureau for Energy Resources
- EUR Bureau of European Affairs
- FSI Foreign Service Institute
- H Bureau of Legislative Affairs
- HR Bureau of Human Resources
- IIP Bureau of International Information Programs
- IJC International Joint Commission
- INL Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
- INR Bureau of Intelligence and Research
- IO Bureau of International Organization Affairs
- IRM Bureau of Information Resource Management
- ISN Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation
- M/OFM Office of Foreign Missions
- NEA Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
- OBO Bureau of Overseas Building Operations
- OES Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs
- OIG Office of the Inspector General
Step 5: Certain Selections May Lead to Additional Choices

Applicants selecting any of the bureaus and offices listed below as their first or second choice for placement will be presented with a branched question after answering question 27 at the end of the application in which they are asked to choose a particular office or country for possible placement:

- A Bureau of Administration
- AF Bureau of African Affairs
- CGFS Bureau of the Comptroller and Financial Services
- DS Bureau of Diplomatic Security
- ECA Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
- EUR Bureau of European Affairs
- FSI Foreign Service Institute
- IO Bureau of International Organization Affairs
- M/OFM Office of Foreign Missions
- NEA Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
- OBO Bureau of Overseas Building Operations
- OES Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs
- PA Bureau of Public Affairs
- R Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
- S Office of the Secretary
- SCA Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs
- USUN United States Mission to the United Nations
- WHA Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
- WHA/USOAS U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States

For example, applicants who chooses the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) will be presented with a follow-on question asking them to specify whether they are interested in a placement in Washington, DC, or with one of more than 42 overseas embassies/missions.
18.1 Please indicate the Bureau of European Affairs location/country you are interested in as your first choice.

- Washington D.C. Only
- ALBANIA
- ARMENIA
- AUSTRIA
- BELGIUM - EMBASSY TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
- BELGIUM - US MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION
- BELGIUM - US MISSION TO NATO
- BERMUDA
- BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
- BULGARIA
- CROATIA
- CYPRUS
- ESTONIA
- FRANCE
- GEORGIA
- GERMANY
- GREECE
- HOLY SEE
- HUNGARY
- IRELAND
- ITALY (Except Florence)
- LATVIA
- LITHUANIA
- LUXEMBOURG
- MACEDONIA
- MALTA
- MOLDOVA
- NETHERLANDS
- NORWAY
- POLAND
- PORTUGAL
- ROMANIA
- RUSSIA
- SERBIA
- SLOVAKIA
- SLOVENIA
- SPAIN
- SWEDEN
- SWITZERLAND
- TURKEY
- Turkey: Istanbul - Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START)
- UKRAINE
- UNITED KINGDOM
Applicants who choose the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) will be presented with this follow-on question asking them to specify one of seven offices for possible placement:

18.1 Please indicate the Foreign Service Institute office you are interested in as your first choice.

- FSI/FO Director’s Office (260100)
- FSI/EX Office of the Executive Director (260200)
- FSI/LMS Leadership and Management School (260400)
- FSI/SAIT School of Applied Information Technology (260500)
- FSI/SLS School of Language Studies (260600)
- FSI/SPAS School of Professional and Area Studies (260300)
- FSI/TC Transition Center (260700)

To illustrate how this works, the application for a student who selected the last item in each of the above lists – United Kingdom for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) and FSI/TC Transition Center for the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) – would be forwarded by the Office of Student Programs to:

The U.S. Mission to the United Kingdom, where the student would be considered for placement in the various sections of the U.S. Embassy in London, as well as for placement at the U.S. consulates in Belfast and Edinburgh.

The Transition Center at the Foreign Service Center, where the student would be considered for placement in the various offices that make up the Transition Center.

Applicants must chose a first and second choice from the more than available 250 options, which may be viewed by clicking on this link and scrolling down to question 18:

[Preview questions for the fall 2016 Student Internship Program](#) (expires March 1)

**Step 6: Narrowing Your Options by Location**

Depending on which locations an applicant is interested in, the choice of bureaus/offices can be broader or narrower:

- Those interested in a placement in Washington, DC may choose any bureau or office other than USUN.
- Applicants interested in a placement at a U.S. embassy or overseas diplomatic mission must choose the respective geographic bureau (AF, EUR, NEA, SCA, WHA) or IO for overseas international organizations, such as NATO, as one of their choices.
- Applicants interested in a placement in New York City may select DS, ECA, M/OFM, PA, or USUN as one of their choices.
- Applicants interested in a placement in a U.S. city other than New York City or Washington may select CGFS, DS or M/OFM as one of their two choices.
Step 7: Narrowing Your Options by Interests or Academic Major

Applicants may be able to determine whether a bureau/office is a good fit by reading the descriptions on pages 17-54 in the student internship brochure:

Student Internship Program Brochure

Applicants can also take advantage of the “Which Office is Right for You” feature on careers.state.gov to identify bureaus to which their majors or academic interests may relate:

Which Office is Right for You?

If a particular major is not listed, you may need to be a bit creative. For example, since “Sustainability” is not one of the majors listed, you might instead choose “Environmental Studies” – in which case you will see that nine bureaus/offices have indicated that they are interested in students with that major.

Some bureaus and offices have indicated that they are interested in students in “any” major. If you chose “Any Majors” from the drop-down menu, you will see that approximately 20 bureaus and offices fall into that category.

Bear in mind as well that most bureaus and offices require a broad range of skills and academic backgrounds to accomplish their goals, so if you are interested in a placement with a particular bureau or office you should not rule it out if you do not see it listed under your major.

Step 8: Learn More about the Bureau/Office or U.S. Embassy/Mission/Consulate where You Might Be Placed

If a placement in Washington or other U.S. location is of interest, learn more about the bureaus and offices you are interested in by going to the following website, which contains an “Alphabetical Listing of Bureaus and Offices”:

Alphabetical List of Bureaus and Offices

If you are interested in an overseas placement, go to the following website, which contains links to “U.S. Embassies and Other Posts”:

U.S. Embassies and Other Posts

If you are interested in going to Europe, for example, you should click on the area marked “Europe-Eurasia” on the map, which will take you to a listing of Embassies and Consulates and U.S. Missions to international organizations.

U.S. Embassies and Other Posts in Europe and Eurasia
Applicants interested in U.S. Missions to international organizations, such as UNESCO in Paris or NATO in Brussels, can also find information on the Bureau of International Organization Affairs website. [http://www.state.gov/p/io/](http://www.state.gov/p/io/)

Not all embassies/consulates/missions accept interns so be sure to preview the list:

Preview questions for the fall 2016 Student Internship Program (expires March 1)

**Step 9: Preparing a Competitive Application**

Think carefully about the two selections you have made, which determine where your application will be sent, choosing combinations that are the best fit for your educational and professional interests. Some students choose only domestic placement opportunities in Washington, New York City, or other U.S. cities, whiles others choose only overseas options in the same or two different bureaus. It is also possible to pick one of each.

Probably the most important two pieces of the application are your responses to the following questions.

**Question 17:** List any special skills (e.g. computer), experiences, current licenses, honors, awards, special accomplishments, and/or training (with date completed) relating to the position for which you are applying. Maximum length of 1000 characters.

**Question 25:** Now we are going to ask you to include a one-page Statement of Interest that describes your objectives and motivation in seeking an internship. As bureau representatives use this statement in making their selections, you should use the statement to explain how your academic courses and other personal experiences relate to the bureau(s) or office(s) to which you are applying. Please use this opportunity to tell us about any specific disadvantages you may have overcome. Maximum length of 2500 characters (counting spaces).

**Step 10: Preparing a Competitive Application (continued)**

For those applying for an overseas placement, keep in mind that your application will be distributed throughout the various sections that make up an embassy, mission and/or consulate – Consular, Economic, Management, Political, Public Diplomacy, Security, and the office of the ambassador (at an embassy) or principal officer (at a consulate).

In the case of those applying for overseas placement, keep in mind as well that your application may be reviewed by other embassies or missions in the bureau you have selected. For example, if one country in EUR does not receive enough applicants for the available, the intern coordinator may reach out to applicants who selected a different EUR country.

For those applying for a domestic placement, keep in mind that your application will be distributed to all of the offices that make up the bureau or office.
Bearing in mind that your potential supervisor in the sections or offices where your application is sent will compare your answers to those of other applicants, ask yourself whether:

In your response to question 17, have you provided enough information, such as an example of how you used your knowledge of computer applications, to enable your potential supervisor to determine whether you have the necessary skills to become an effective member of the team?

In your response to question 25, your statement of interest, have you discussed only what you hope to get out of the experience instead of communicating a) your understanding of the mission/work of the embassy/mission/bureau/offices to which you have applied and b) what you believe you can contribute? Statements of interest that do not address these points are generally not as competitive as those that do. Carefully proofread your statement to ensure there are no grammatical or spelling errors.

**Step 11: Get your application in ahead of time, review it, and revise if necessary**

You have until 11:59 p.m. EST Tuesday, March 1, to complete your application.

*It is possible to correct, change, or update your application up to the deadline.* We strongly recommend that you not wait until the last minute, but instead:

- Complete your application no later than Friday, February 26.
- Follow all instructions, including uploading your transcript.
- Save a copy of your application as a pdf and your Statement of Interest as a Word document.
- Print out a copy of your application, review it for errors, and have someone whose opinion you value review it as well.
- Make any needed corrections or updates (you can even change your mind about which bureau/office to apply to) prior to the March 1 deadline.

**Step 12: Good luck and stay in touch**

- Comments on the usefulness of this guide in navigating the Student Internship Program application are welcome, and suggestions for improvements may be directed to Recruitment and Outreach Officer Jim Ellickson-Brown ([Ellickson-BrownJR@state.gov](mailto:Ellickson-BrownJR@state.gov)).
- This guide is tailored for the Fall 2016 internship season. Future editions will be tailored to the Spring 2017 and subsequent seasons.