

**“You’re Fired! Screening  
International Internship  
Applicants through a  
Preparation Course”**

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# International Internship Program Goals

“develop a breadth of knowledge and a depth of understanding to comprehend our complex international neighborhood”

“incorporate practical experience in an international setting”



# Benefits of an International Internship

- Resume builder
  - Practical work experience
  - International experience
  - Increased cultural competence (?)
- Academic dividends
  - Test theory against politics experienced first-hand
  - Build academic skills in practice
- Clarification of career preferences

“I gained an enormous amount of first-hand experience working in an international institution and living abroad. I was able to absorb information that otherwise would be difficult to learn if I were to read it from a text, rather than being on-site watching it unfold.”

Fall Semester Intern, 2006



“As idealistic as this sounds, I wouldn’t pass up on any of my bad experiences. They all taught me lessons that I needed. Yes, it was embarrassing to go to the wrong meeting, or not be able to speak French, or get kicked out of a meeting I wasn’t supposed to be in. Yet, I developed characteristics from each of those experiences and I’m a better person for it.”

Fall Semester Intern, 2006

“In one week, I have learned more about world conflict regions than a year of reading the newspaper and [attending] classes....I could write more, but suffice it to say, world diplomacy has never been so poignant.”

Winter Semester Intern, 2007

# Background

Started: 2002

Locations: Scottish and  
EU Parliaments

Offices: MSPs/MEPs,  
Party HQ/Research

Participants: SP: 51,  
EUP: 18



# Background II

- Academic Credit:  
Pol. Sci., IR, IAS,  
etc.
- Duties
- Nature of  
supervision
- The ideal intern
- Future direction



# Application Process

- Eligible students: juniors or seniors
- Deadlines:
  - Spring Term and Fall Semester: February 1
  - Winter Semester: October 1
- Process
  - On-line application form
  - Two letters of recommendation
  - Letter of intent, Resume, Writing sample
  - Transcript

# Selected Intern Enrollment

	<b>Edinburgh</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
<b>2005</b> Winter Semester	5	2
Spring Term	9	2
Fall Semester	5	2
<b>2006</b> Winter Semester	5	4
Spring Term	10	2
Fall Semester	2	2
<b>2007</b> Winter Semester	1	3

end-of-internship  
student self-  
assessment:

“initiative means  
everything on this  
internship – you  
can’t emphasize that  
enough”

Fall Semester Intern, 2006



# Program Challenges

- Selection
  - Screening applicants
  - Assessing “survival skills” and “international savviness”
- Overcoming programmatic stereotypes
  - Self-reliance
  - Entitlement
  - Academic rigor
  - Demanding nature of an internship
- Preparing students for academic and internship duties

# Moving Away from a Study Abroad Model

- level of structure
- reducing unpredictability
- planning and scripting the experience
- on-site faculty as mediator
- academic framework of home institution
  - ⇒ cultural, emotional, intellectual, and practical challenges differ qualitatively

# Goals of the Prep Class

- Assess and weed out
- Prepare

# The Prep Class: Screening

During the preparation course, you will be evaluated on your:

- ability to function effectively when given vague instructions;
- ability to work well in groups;
- ability to share substantive opinions appropriately;
- ability to work through problems;
- ability to identify multiple solutions to complex problems;
- initiative; and
- passion about issues and experiences.

# The Prep Class: Preparation

During the preparation course, we will focus on a number of activities that will prepare you to:

- assess your resource and information needs, plan out a project, and produce an appropriate product even when given vague instructions and a short completion deadline
- express your opinions clearly and with substance—both verbally and in writing
- understand Parliamentary procedures and structures
- understand some of the issues facing Scotland and Europe
- condense large amounts of information into clear and concise political briefs
- negotiate your intern duties and role in your assigned office
- effectively deal with culture shock
- remain safe while on the internship

# The prep class

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Screen</b>	<b>Prepare</b>
Readings	✓	✓
Debate/Discussion	✓	✓
Quizzes	✓	
Research and Writing Assignments	✓	✓
<i>Lonely Planet</i> exercise		✓
Cross-Cultural Training		✓
Safety Briefing		✓
Office Skills Discussion		✓
Survival Skills Activity		✓
Discussion with Former Interns		✓

# The Final Decision

- Assessment and evaluation -- after each class
- Final plea
- Final decision

# Outcomes

- Changed classroom atmosphere
- More-informed selection decisions
- Better prepared students
- Less difficulty in administering the program
- Stronger students