



International Career Development in USA

Internship / Training Program Guide

1. Welcome to ICD USA – International Career Development.....	2
2. Internship /Training Program	3
2.1. Program Requirements.....	3
2.2. Standard Requirements for All Applicants.....	4
2.2 Duration of the program	4
2.3 Compensation	5
3. ICD USA Services	5
4. Step-by-Step Program Guide	6
5. Program Fees.....	7
7. ICD USA Cultural Awareness Training Course	9
8. FAQ.....	11



Dear International Student, Graduate, and Young Professional:

Thank you for considering participation in the U.S. Intern and Trainee Exchange Visitor Program. This guide introduces you to our programs and the application process, as well as how we secure appropriate internship or training opportunities with American companies in the United States. At the end of the booklet, you will find our contact information and details on how to proceed with the placement and application processes.

1. Welcome to ICD USA – International Career Development

Are you excited to immerse yourself in American culture while developing your professional skills in your field? Are you ready to gain a fresh perspective on your career path and create unforgettable memories? If so, our Internship and Trainee Programs offer the perfect opportunity for you! Enhance your resume with international experience, broaden your global network, refine your English language skills, and seize the chance to explore the U.S. while building lifelong friendships.

Why Choose Us?

At ICD USA, we take pride in our personalized approach to finding the most suitable placement for each participant. Rather than submitting resumes to multiple companies, we thoroughly evaluate your qualifications, educational background, and career goals alongside the needs of the host company to ensure a mutually beneficial match. With an impressive placement rate exceeding 90%, most ICD USA applicants secure their positions within just a few weeks.

Our Track Record of Success

ICD USA has served as a placement agency for over 15 years. In collaboration with designated U.S. exchange visitor sponsors, it has promoted the J-1 Intern and Trainee Exchange Programs by selecting, screening, and securing internships and traineeships for eligible students and young professionals with American host companies. Thanks to successful placements, effective management, and a strong support system, nearly all participants have completed their programs, gained cultural experiences, and applied their newly acquired knowledge to their future studies or careers. ICD USA keeps in touch with former participants who share their post-program experiences and reflect on their time in the United States.

Key Benefits of Organizing Your Internship/Training with ICD USA

Full Support: We meet your internship or training needs by selecting suitable internships, preparing you for interviews with pre-approved American companies, assisting with the internship and training plan (DS-7002 form), and providing the Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (DS-2019 form) required for the J-1 Visa. Additionally, we offer health insurance, housing information, and support in finding language schools if necessary.

Personalized Support: Each participant in the program receives customized assistance to meet their needs.

Expert Knowledge: With our in-depth understanding of the U.S. internship market, we offer honest advice and tailored guidance to ensure your success.

Commitment to Excellence: We strive to ensure the process is simple, professional, and affordable for everyone.

Risk-Free Guarantee: If ICD USA is unable to secure your placement, we will refund your deposit (20% minus bank fees and administrative costs) per our policy.

The ICD USA team is eager to welcome you to our program!

2. Internship /Training Program

Every year, thousands of students and young professionals from around the world travel to the U.S. to gain valuable experience, enhance their skills, improve their English, and create lasting memories!

International students, graduates, and young professionals encounter challenges while searching for suitable internships in the U.S. They require support from a reputable agency to connect with American companies, secure placements, assist with application documents, and prepare for internship and cultural experiences. ICD USA provides professional services, including:

- Step-by-step assistance throughout the application process.
- Support with writing resumes and cover letters in the U.S. format.
- Internship and training placement opportunities.
- Training and Internship Placement Plan (DS-7002) and Agreement with the Host Company.
- Assistance in obtaining the DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1 Status).
- Suggestions for housing and language schools (if desired)
- Guidance on the U.S. visa application process, interviews, insurance, airline tickets, cultural orientation, and more!

2.1. Program Requirements

Cultural Importance:

This program aims to enable international participants to engage in cultural exchanges with Americans through authentic, skill-based training at U.S. companies. A primary goal is to foster mutual understanding and to learn about each other's cultures through business and cultural collaborations. Consequently, this program emphasizes the importance of cultural experiences during the internship and training programs.

Internship Program / Traineeship Program

In partnership with the Exchange Visitor Program sponsors, ICD USA supports the U.S. Intern and Trainee Exchange Visitor Programs for international applicants living outside the United States who may be eligible for one of these programs.

The INTERN Program is intended for individuals who:

- are currently enrolled in and pursuing academic studies outside the U.S. or

- have obtained a degree from an accredited higher education institution outside the United States within the twelve months before the start date of their exchange visitor program.

The maximum duration of the internship program: 12 months.

The TRAINEE Program is intended for individuals who:

- hold a degree or professional certificate from an accredited post-secondary institution outside the United States and have at least one year of relevant work experience gained outside the United States or
- have five years of relevant work experience gained outside the United States.

The maximum duration of the trainee program is 18 months.

2.2. Standard Requirements for All Applicants

- The chosen discipline, major, qualifications, and experience must align with the internship field.
- English proficiency must meet standards for internship and training programs.
- To be eligible for either program, it is imperative to present evidence of sufficient financial resources for the entire duration of the program.
- The Internship and Training Program allows foreign nationals to gain valuable skills and learn about U.S. business practices.
- To help participants fully engage in this experience without financial stress, the exchange program sponsor recommends having approximately \$1,000 available monthly, whether from personal resources or support from a parent or friend.

Since each situation is unique, feel free to ask questions or express concerns during your interview for guidance regarding your specific circumstances.

2.2 Duration of the program

The program lasts a minimum of 2 months, although most employers prefer a duration of at least 6 months. Extensions of up to 12 or 18 months are possible, but they come with costs for reviewing and approving extension applications, evaluating participant performance, issuing a new DS-2019 Form, and extending insurance coverage. We recommend determining the ideal duration for internships or training in advance.

After completing the Internship/Training Program, participants will enter a 30-day travel status, also known as a grace period. Those wishing to remain in the U.S. as tourists must follow the guidelines established by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS permits individuals to stay legally in the United States for 30 days following the end date indicated on their DS-2019 form (Certificate of Eligibility). It is essential to comply with this regulation.

Participants traveling outside the U.S. during the grace period may face denial of re-entry by DHS due to invalid J-1 status. Employment is also prohibited during this time. If a participant ends their program before the DS-2019 date, they will not receive a grace period and should contact ICD USA for guidance.

Ultimately, staying in the United States beyond the authorized period, even for one day, can lead to severe penalties for anyone intending to return to the U.S.

2.3 Compensation

Compensation varies among organizations and is primarily influenced by the industry, participant experience, and several other factors. It is standard to offer a modest stipend.

Like U.S. students, international students must apply their academic knowledge through summer internships. In these cases, completing an internship can earn college credits, fulfilling specific criteria as if the student had taken a class. Numerous American companies offer full-time internships that provide credits upon completion, although these positions often do not pay. American firms are eager to host international students under similar conditions, allowing them to enhance their skills through skill-based internships.

What are the benefits of an unpaid internship?

- **Immersive English Training** – Instead of spending \$500 per week on classroom-based language courses, participants improve their English and communication skills naturally in a professional environment.
- **Career Advancement – Boost Your Career** – In a highly competitive internship market, a 2- to 5-month unpaid internship can be a valuable steppingstone, providing hands-on experience and enhancing future job prospects.
- **Practical Experience** – Unpaid internships provide hands-on training in your field of study, allowing you to develop professional skills while also improving adaptability, organizational abilities, and communication techniques.
- **Cultural Insights** – Experience a new work environment and gain a deeper understanding of American business culture.
- **Networking Opportunities** – Build meaningful professional connections and expand your international network.

3. ICD USA Services

We take a personalized approach to align each student with the most suitable internship or training position. Instead of merely sending resumes to numerous companies, we conduct a thorough assessment of the student's qualifications and educational background, along with the specific requirements and preferences of the host company, ensuring a mutually beneficial match for both parties.

ICD USA offers a variety of internship and training opportunities, helping you find the most engaging and appropriate match for your interests.

4. Step-by-Step Program Guide

ICD USA offers professional internships and training programs for international participants, providing opportunities for professional development, insights into U.S. business practices, and a deeper understanding of American society and culture.

1. Submit your online application at least 3 to 4 months prior to the intended internship or training. We will contact you shortly to discuss all the details.
2. Review and sign the ICD USA placement agreement, which requires a 20% down payment¹.
3. ICD USA will assist you in creating your resume and cover letter in U.S. format, including all the necessary application materials.
4. Once ICD USA identifies a company that best fits your background and expresses interest, we will reach out to schedule an interview. No panic—ICD USA will be there to support you and provide valuable advice².
5. ICD USA will discuss your placement interview results with a host company to confirm your acceptance and prepare a placement agreement if your interview is successful.
6. ICD USA will assist host companies in preparing the Internship/Training Placement Plan (DS-7002 form) and the required paperwork for exchange program sponsors to obtain the DS-2019 form.
7. ICD USA will assist you in completing the SEVIS fee payment.
8. Once all necessary documents are obtained, ICD USA will provide guidance for the visa interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate³.

¹. A refund of the deposit (first payment of 20%, minus the transaction fee) will be issued if ICD USA fails to secure the placement.

² **Advice from ICD USA:** To feel more comfortable about your future interview, we suggest you listen to audiobooks in English, for example, on Spotify or Audible.com.

³ Avoid making any travel plans or reservations (e.g., purchasing plane tickets, booking a hotel, etc.) until your passport is returned with a valid non-immigrant visa. Check your visa stamp for any potential errors promptly.

WHAT CONSTITUTES "STRONG TIES"?

Strong ties differ among countries, cities, and individuals. These ties can include jobs, homes, families, and bank accounts. "Ties" represent the various aspects of life that connect you to your country of residence, encompassing your belongings, work, social relationships, and family connections.

As a citizen or legal permanent resident, consider your ties to your home country. Would the U.S. consular office view you as having a residence in your home country that you do not intend to abandon? The likely answer would be "yes" if you have a job or family, own or rent a house or apartment, or have other commitments that require your return to your home country at the end of your visit to the United States. Each person's situation is unique.

Consular officers recognize applicant diversity. During visa interviews, they assess each case individually, considering professional, social, cultural, and relevant factors. For younger applicants lacking established ties, they focus on intentions, family circumstances, and future plans in their country. Each case is thoroughly reviewed under the law.

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html>

9. ICD USA provides valuable tips and resources to help you find suitable housing near your internship or training location. Additionally, we can connect you with former participants or housing networks for recommendations, ensuring you find a safe and comfortable place to stay.

ICD USA's support extends far beyond placement services. If you encounter any **emergencies or challenges** during your program, our team is **here to assist you every step of the way**, ensuring a smooth and secure experience.

Upon the conclusion of the internship and training program, you shall be awarded a certificate of participation from the sponsor of the exchange visitor program.



5. Program Fees

Internship/Training placement	US \$
3-6 months	890
7-12 months	1290
Special Location Request	485
Internship Training Placement Plan (DS-7002) and Certificate of Eligibility Application Processing Paperwork (DS-2019)	
3-6 months	1290
7-12 months	1390
Expedite Processing	580
Premium Package: <i>Internship/Training Placement + Forms DS-7002 and DS-2019 Application documents and handbook + Help with housing search + ICD USA Cultural Awareness Training Course+ US Sim Card</i>	
3-6 months	2090
7-12 months	2590
Health Emergency and Liability Insurance	98/month
ICD USA Cultural Awareness Training Course	380

Other Expenses (Not Included in Our Price)

1. \$ 220 SEVIS Fee⁴
2. \$ 185 US Embassy/Consulate Fee⁵
3. Flight ticket
4. Estimated living expenses and other costs associated with cultural and sporting events.

Payment Process

20% of the total amount after signing the contract with ICD USA⁶.

80% of the total amount after signing the internship/training placement contract.

7. ICD USA Cultural Awareness Training Course

At ICD USA, we are committed to ensuring that our participants are well-prepared for a successful J-1 journey in the United States. While many aspects of living and working in the U.S. can only be fully understood through firsthand experience, having a solid foundation in American culture can significantly enhance your ability to adapt quickly and thrive in both professional and social settings.

We recognize that cultural differences play a crucial role in workplace dynamics, communication styles, and daily interactions. Adjusting to a new environment, work culture, and social norms can be both exciting and challenging, which is why we have developed the ICD USA Cultural Awareness Training Course. This course is designed to help participants:

- **Understand American workplace culture** – Learn about workplace expectations, professional etiquette, and common business practices in the U.S.
- **Improve cross-cultural communication skills** – Gain insights into American communication styles, including directness, small talk, and workplace interactions.
- **Navigate daily life in the U.S.** – Get practical tips on everything from public transportation to social customs, dining etiquette, and networking.

⁴. The SEVIS fee is assessed as an integral component of the J-1 application process, facilitating the registration of international applicants within the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). This system is designed to enable the tracking and updating of the status of international students and exchange visitors in compliance with the regulations set forth by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) <https://www.fmiffee.com/i901fee/index.html>

⁵. U.S. Embassy/Consulate fees may vary. For more information and the latest updates, please visit the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your home country. <http://www.usembassy.gov/>

⁶. A refund of the deposit (first payment of 20%, minus the transaction fee) will be issued if ICD USA fails to secure the placement.

- **Build strong relationships with colleagues and peers** – Develop strategies for adapting to team dynamics, handling conflicts, and making meaningful connections.
- **Gain confidence in social and professional settings** – Feel more comfortable engaging in conversations, expressing ideas, and participating in social and networking events.

By completing **the ICD USA Cultural Awareness Training Course**, participants will enter their program with a better understanding of American culture, making it easier to integrate into their new surroundings and maximize their J-1 experience. We believe that cultural awareness fosters stronger relationships, enhances career development, and leads to a more enriching exchange experience.

This course is an essential step in preparing for your journey, and we are excited to help you build the skills and knowledge needed to make the most of your time in the U.S.

8. FAQ

Should I apply as an "Intern" or a "Trainee"?

You can apply for the **Intern Program** if you are a foreign national:

- who is currently enrolled in and pursuing academic studies outside the US, or
- who graduated from an accredited post-secondary academic institution outside the United States no more than 12 months before the start date of his or her exchange visitor program.

Maximum Intern program duration: 12 months.

You can apply for the **Trainee Program** if you are a foreign national:

- who holds either a degree or a professional certificate from an accredited post-secondary academic institution outside the United States and has at least one year of relevant work experience also obtained outside the United States, or
- has five years of relevant work experience gained outside the United States.

Maximum TRAINEE program duration: 18 months.

What is the 30-day grace period?

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants all J-1 program participants a 30-day travel status period after completing their program. This period is NOT included in the program dates listed on Form DS-2019. The grace period allows participants to travel domestically and/or prepare for their departure from the United States. It should not be used for any other purpose. Participants who travel outside the United States during the grace period may not be permitted to re-enter the country by DHS, as they are no longer in valid J-1 status during this time. Employment is also not allowed during the grace period.

Why are a visa sponsor and the DS-2019 form necessary?

The DS-2019 form, officially known as the Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor J-1 Status, is issued by the program sponsor to facilitate the application for a J-1 non-immigrant visa. This visa permits entry into the United States to participate in the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program under the Intern or Trainee categories.

When and how should I apply?

Internship and training program applications are accepted year-round. However, the number of applicants greatly exceeds the available positions. To improve your chances, apply to ICD USA 3 to 4 months before your intended start date. The earlier you apply, the better your chances of securing the internship.

How long is an internship/training?

The program lasts a minimum of 2 months; however, many employers prefer interns and trainees for a duration of at least 6 months due to the extensive training required. Extensions of up to 12 to 18 months are possible, but they require the approval of a new application and incur additional costs for a new training plan (DS-7002) and certificate of eligibility (DS-2019). We recommend reviewing all options carefully in advance to determine the best internship training period.

Are there any occupations excluded from J intern or training programs?

Trainees and interns cannot be assigned to unskilled or casual labor positions, roles that involve more than 20 percent clerical work, or positions that require providing therapy, medication, or any form of clinical or medical care. This includes sports therapy, physical therapy, psychological counseling, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, social work, speech therapy, and early childhood education.

What is the maximum length allowed for programs?

An internship program lasts a maximum of 12 months.

A trainee program lasts a maximum of 18 months. Exception: Hospitality and Tourism are restricted to 12 months.

Are travel and living expenses included in the price?

The agency fee does not include travel, accommodation, or language course expenses. While some employers may cover specific travel or housing costs, ICD USA cannot guarantee this. Having sufficient financial resources to qualify for a J1 visa is essential, as it will allow you to fully engage in your experience without financial worries.

Are internships paid?

Compensation varies by company and depends on the industry, the participants' work experience, and other factors. Some companies may help with housing and/or transportation.

What are the benefits of a professional internship or training placement offered by ICD USA?

- With over 15 years of experience promoting the Intern and Trainee exchange programs, ICD USA offers the following benefits for international applicants:
- Thorough screening to confirm eligibility for the Intern or Trainee programs.
- Effective placement services and support for placement interviews, along with introductions to potential host companies.
- Careful review and processing of application documents.
- Collaboration with host companies (host partners) to develop individual internship and training placement plans (DS-7002), which are essential for obtaining the Certificate of

Eligibility for J-1 Exchange Visitor Status (DS-2019). Both documents are needed to apply for a J-1 visa.

- Guidance in completing the online visa application and paying the required fees to book a visa interview appointment.
- Enrollment in suitable health insurance that meets U.S. Exchange Program requirements.
- Providing reliable housing information and advice.
- Advice on suitable language schools if needed.
- Full refund of the initial 20% deposit, excluding bank fees, if a suitable placement is not found.

In summary, ICD USA offers personalized support for all applicants and program participants. ICD USA actively seeks new opportunities for international students, graduates, and young professionals. We continually pursue partnerships and encourage U.S. businesses to host international interns and trainees. Our list of available positions is updated weekly.

Is there any help in finding accommodation?

ICD USA offers guidance on various accommodations and provides information about affordable housing options. If you are unable to secure a suitable housing arrangement before your departure, we also supply a list of budget-friendly hotels for your first week upon arrival. The cost of your stay will depend directly on your geographic region and location.

What are the chances of a successful internship or training placement?

ICD USA takes pride in its impressive 90% placement success rate for applicants. Not only do we maintain a high rate of student placements, but we also secure these placements within just a few weeks.

Nevertheless, each case is unique and influenced by factors such as the industry, the participants' level of experience, their proficiency in English, the duration of the program, and other considerations. Therefore, we recommend that students submit their applications at least two months before the start date of their intended internship or training.

Can I switch internships immediately or seek a job elsewhere?

Regrettably, this is not permitted. You possess a J-1 visa specifically for an internship or training program, as indicated by your DS-2019 Form (Certificate of Eligibility) and the DS-7002 Training Plan. Both documents are governed by the agreement signed with the host company and approved by ICD USA.

In other words, the J-1 visa does not include a work permit; you may only participate in training at the host company specified in your J-1 visa approval. Changing your host company is allowed only under exceptional circumstances, which we will discuss during orientation.

When can I arrive in the U.S. before my J-1 program starts, and how long can I stay after it ends?

You cannot arrive more than 30 days before the program start date indicated on your DS-2019. After completing your exchange program, you have a 30-day grace period to leave the United States.

Why do I need a sponsor for my internship or training program?

The program sponsors are responsible for screening and selecting eligible foreign nationals for participation in their designated exchange visitor program, as well as supporting and monitoring exchange visitors during their stay in the United States.

How do I know if I meet the two-year foreign residency requirement?

Some J-1 exchange visitors must adhere to the U.S. Department of State's Two-Year Foreign Residence Requirement (INA 212 (e)), which requires them to return to their home country for two years after finishing their J-1 program. If you belong to one of the following categories, you are likely subject to this requirement upon completing your J-1 program:

- Medical doctor sponsored by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG).
- You are from a country listed on the U.S. Department of State's "skills list."
- You received funding from your home government or the U.S. government through agencies such as Fulbright.

The Two-Year Foreign Residency Requirement does not prevent your future reentry into the U.S. with an F-1 student, B-1/B-2 (tourist), or J-1 student visa. However, it will restrict your ability to obtain H-1B non-immigrant employment or Permanent Residency status until the two-year requirement is either satisfied or waived.

How long does it take to get a J-1 Visa?

The wait time for an interview and processing of a J-1 Visa varies by country and depends on your individual circumstances. To learn more about interview wait times and processing durations, please visit [www.travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html) and select Visa Wait Times <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>

We encourage you to apply as soon as possible. Please be aware that exchange visitors starting new programs may not enter the United States more than 30 days before their program start date.

Can I repeat the J-1 program?

The rules for repeating J-1 intern and trainee programs differ by program. Interns can join another intern program after returning home and completing at least one semester at their

university. Graduates who had a brief internship within 12 months of graduation may qualify for consecutive intern programs. Trainees can repeat the J-1 program after living outside the U.S. for two years.

When repeating either program, the second J-1 must be different and more advanced than the first, and applicants must meet the eligibility requirements.

Confusion often arises between J-1 program repetition regulations and the two-year home-country requirement (212(e)). Only some individuals are subject to 212(e), but all must adhere to the J-1 repetition rules. Those subject to 212(e) will have it noted on their passports and DS-2019 form. If applicable, they must reside in their home country for two years before applying for another U.S. visa. The two-year home residency rule does not apply to the J-1 visa, allowing eligible individuals to repeat the J-1 program.

Do you have a question? Call us or send us a quick email. We look forward to hearing from you!

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