

Career Opportunities in Education (International)

International education encompasses a wide range of careers including teaching, curriculum development, technical assistance, exchange, capacity building, training and the promotion of international understanding. International education professionals work in colleges, universities, governmental agencies, non-governmental/non-profit organizations, foundations, and private firms.

Career Paths and Entry Salaries

Career paths in the field of international education are varied. To advance, one might work in a progression of positions within a particular organization or switch to similar work in another organization. They might also broaden their experience by working in several functional areas within international education. People benefit from developing a diversity of experience, permitting not only flexibility in job possibilities, but also qualifying themselves for management positions involving a variety of functional areas.

For example, professionals might work within an international exchange organization assisting with the coordination of high school exchanges, then work at a college study abroad office and/or international student office, positioning themselves to perhaps oversee an International Center or Education Abroad Program.

Entry-level positions for those graduating with a master's degree typically involve administrative and programming responsibilities. Job titles might include: program coordinator, educational assistant, foreign student advisor, study abroad advisor, international admissions officer, or international program exchange officer.

Depending upon education and experience, salaries range from the high-\$20's to mid-\$30's. Salaries tend to be higher in governmental agencies and private firms.

Qualifications Necessary to Enter the Field

Required qualifications vary depending on the particular position, but most may be expected to include some or all of the following:

- Masters degree preferred in most cases, sometimes required
- International study and/or work experience preferred (not just travel)
- Experience with ethnically and culturally diverse populations
- Proficiency in a foreign language is helpful (often required)
- Knowledge of foreign educational systems, or US immigration rules and regulations
- Work experience in some aspect of international education/exchange often preferred
- Program or project management experience
- Strong oral/written communication skills, interpersonal skills

Sample Groups of Employers

Universities and Colleges/ International Exchange Organizations/Non-profits:

- Academy for Educational Development, www.aed.org/
- American Field Service, www.afs.org/

- American Institute for Foreign Study, www.aifs.org
- Council for International Exchange of Scholars, www.cies.org/
- Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), www.ciee.org/
- Institute of International Education (IIE), www.iie.org/
- International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), www.irex.org/
- Rotary International, www.rotary.org/
- World Learning, www.worldlearning.org/
- Youth for Understanding, www.yfu.org

Associations/Foundations/Government Agencies/Private Business:

- American Studies Association, www.theasa.net
- Business Council for International Understanding, www.bciu.org/
- Creative Associates, <http://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/>
- Ford Foundation, www.fordfound.org
- The Asia Society, www.asiasociety.org/
- US Department of Education, www.ed.gov
- US Department of State, www.state.gov/
- US Information Agency, dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/
- US Agency for International Development, www.usaid.gov/

Demands and Future Challenges of the Profession

International exchange in education and capacity building programs in development and human rights have experienced dramatic increases in recent years. There are numerous organizations dealing with various aspects of international exchange, and almost every college now has offices that assist international students and offer study-abroad programs. In addition, efforts to increase educational and training programs in the areas of health, human rights and other development fields (including democracy building) have been enhanced. Consequently, the demand for international education professionals has increased as well. On the other hand, due to the popularity of international careers as a whole, and the appeal of working in international education (intercultural environment, diverse and interesting responsibilities, sometimes overseas travel), the competition remains intense. Those with international education experience as a student or adult or international work experience, in addition to foreign language skills, are usually most in demand.

Future Challenges to the Profession

Particularly among universities and colleges, while voice is given to the importance of international education, the dollars to expand and enhance programs are often not forthcoming. The case for ranking international education/exchange high on the list of institutional and national priorities must be made through continuous advocacy for internationalization.

Challenges constantly arise from developments in regions throughout the world. The current concern regarding acts of terrorism directed toward Americans might impact both student interest and parents' willingness to send their children abroad. Instability in a country or region might disrupt programs or cause participants to be recalled. International student visa regulations and processes could also create challenges for international exchange programs.

Resources for more Information

Professional Associations/Websites

NAFSA: Association of International Educators (202) 462-4811; e-mail: inbox@nafsa.org; www.nafsa.org

SIETAR: International Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research (202) 466-7883; e-mail: SIETAR@compuserve.com; sietarinternational.org

Directories

International Exchange Locator: A Resource Directory for Educational and Cultural Exchange

Publications

- NAFSA Job Registry
- International Educator magazine
- Chronicle of Higher Education
- International Employment Weekly
- Monday Developments
- *International Exchange Locator: A Resource Directory for Educational and Cultural Exchange*. Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange. 2005.

Internet Resources

- Chronicle of Higher Education <http://chronicle.com/>
- International Career Employment Weekly <http://www.internationaljobs.org/>
- International Educator <http://www.tieonline.com/>
- Monday Developments <http://www.interaction.org/jobs/index.html>
- NAFSA Job Registry http://www.nafsa.org/job_registry_3
- Transitions Abroad <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/>