

Frequently Asked Questions about the U.S. Business Internship Program for Young Middle Eastern Women.

Program Administration

What organizations run the program?

The U.S. Business Internship Program for Young Middle Eastern Women is a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST) administers recruitment and selection of participants. The International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) administers program activities in the U.S. Both organizations have received ECA grants through open competitions to administer the program.

Why is the U.S. Department of State sponsoring this program?

A U.S. Presidential initiative, MEPI was founded to work with governments and people in the Arab world to expand economic, political and educational opportunities for all people of the region. The initiative strives to link Arab, U.S. and global private sector businesses, non-governmental organizations, civil society elements, and governments to develop innovative policies and programs to achieve this mission. More information about MEPI programs can be found at www.mepi.state.gov.

Selection of Participants

Who can participate in the program?

Candidates are considered without respect to race, color, religion, or national origin. Persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. Competition for the U.S. Business Internship Program for Young Middle Eastern Women is merit-based and open to anyone who:

- Is female and between the ages of 22 and 32 and who is a citizen, permanent resident or national, qualified to hold a valid passport issued by the country of: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq (excluding Iraqi expatriates), Israel (limited to the Israeli Arab sector), Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank/Gaza or Yemen;
- Is able to receive and maintain a U.S. J-1 visa;
- Is a recipient of 1) an undergraduate degree or the equivalent in business or law from a recognized academic institution or 2) an undergraduate degree in any field with at least three years' business experience;
- Has a strong academic background and proficiency in written and spoken English with a minimum Institutional TOEFL (ITP) score of 550;

- Demonstrates maturity, flexibility and suitability to operate successfully in an American corporate environment, leadership potential, and a commitment to professional growth in the business sector of their economies;
- Demonstrates a sufficient level of information technology knowledge and word processing ability to operate in a U.S. business;
- Can begin the program in the U.S. on November 14, 2005;

Individuals in the following circumstances are NOT eligible for the U.S. Business Internship Program for Young Middle Eastern Women:

- U.S. citizens and permanent residents of the United States.
- Individuals currently participating in academic, training or research programs in the United States.
- Individuals currently residing or working outside the participating countries.
- Individuals who have participated in an exchange visitor program sponsored or funded by the U.S. government for a period of more than six weeks and who have not fulfilled their J-1 visa, two- year home residency requirement by the time of application.
- Employees and their families of non-profit organizations who administer the U.S. Business Internship Program for Young Middle Eastern Women on behalf of the United States Department of State. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents.
- Local employees of the U.S. missions abroad who work for the U.S. Department of State are ineligible for grants during the period of their employment and for one year following the termination of employment.
- Immediate families (i.e. spouses and dependent children) of U.S. Department of State employees for a period of one year following the termination of such employment. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents.
- Persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a crime as detailed by ECA.

Competition for the program is open, merit-based and fair. Applicants will be evaluated based on academic excellence, leadership potential, proficiency in written and spoken English (with a minimum institutional TOEFL score of 550), professional maturity, flexibility and suitability to operate successfully in an American corporate environment. Selected applicants must also demonstrate a sufficient level of information technology knowledge and word processing ability to operate in a U.S. business at the appropriate entry or management level.

When and how will I find out if I am accepted to the program?

AMIDEAST will notify you using the contact information you provide on your application.

The selection process is multi-layered. After AMIDEAST conducts a technical review of the applications, AMIDEAST and the U.S. Department of State will invite candidates for in-country interviews. The interview panels will be composed of U.S. experts, alumnae and U.S. Embassy officials. Following the interviews, a panel in Washington, D.C., composed of regional experts, academic experts and U.S. Department of State officials will make the final selection with the help of U.S. Embassy officials.

What makes a successful applicant?

In addition to the eligibility requirements, applicants should demonstrate that they are flexible and can adapt to new situations and challenges. Applicants should display professionalism and willingness to be proactive.

How do I apply?

Interested applicants may apply online at www.amideast.org or download an electronic application at www.amideast.org or www.mepi.state.gov and submit a hard copy application to the country address listed at the end of the application form.

When is the deadline to apply?

All materials must be received by close-of-business at the local AMIDEAST office by September 10, 2005.

What is the schedule of program events?

- September 10, 2005: Application deadline
- Mid-September, 2005: Finalists notification
- October 2005: Pre-departure orientations
- November 14-17, 2005: Washington, D.C. orientation
- November 18-December 18: Academic program
- Early January 2006- March 25, 2006: Internship program
- March 26-29, 2006: Commencement seminar in Washington, D.C.
- March 30, 2006: Return to home countries
- Beginning of alumnae activities

Pre-Departure Orientation in Home Country

Can a family member escort me to the pre-departure orientation?

Yes, a family member may attend the pre-departure orientation. However, family members may not attend the U.S. program.

What happens at the pre-departure orientation and do I have to go?

All participants must attend the pre-departure orientation. The pre-departure orientation includes a session for family members, as well as sessions on preparing to leave for the U.S., travel and visa information, insurance coverage, and an overview of the program.

U.S. Orientation

What is recovered at the orientation in Washington D.C.?

The orientation in Washington, D.C. is the first opportunity for all participants to meet and is designed to introduce participants to the program goals and opportunities. Specifically, orientation will cover health and safety issues, maximizing the academic and internship components, developing a professional network, and the logistics of the program.

U.S. Academic Component

What is the academic business component?

Participants will study at month long business programs at either the Goizueta Business School at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, or the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Participants will take approximately two courses per day on topics such as U.S. business culture and practice, leadership development, women in business, marketing, accounting, business law and ethics, entrepreneurship, and information technology. In addition to the core business courses, law participants will take specialized law courses.

The academic component of the program serves to provide a comprehensive and customized experience of an executive MBA education. It is an intensive and concentrated program, which includes full days of scheduled classes and extracurricular programming; classes will be held five days a week. Participants must actively participate in all required activities and academic work. Regular attendance to class and completion of outside projects in the evenings and weekends is required in order to adequately prepare participants for their internship experience.

Will I receive a certificate for the program?

Participants will receive certificates of completion from the academic host and the Department of State.

U.S. Internship Component

What is an internship?

Participants will have supervised practical training at U.S. businesses in major U.S. cities across the U.S. During the internship, participants will be exposed to the day-to-day operations of a U.S. business. Participants will have a mentor who will guide their work and professional development. The internships will be unique and matched to the participants' interest and skill. Past participants took part in a variety of work assignments such as conducting business and industry research, assisting in data management, preparing business and legal documentation, attending internal and external business meetings, observing internship host staff, coordinating meetings and events, participating in team projects, observing legal cases, attending company training activities and observing U.S. business culture in action.

How are participants matched with internship hosts?

Each participant will be placed at an internship at a business in the United States according to their academic background, professional abilities and application, and the needs of the host companies; IREX cannot guarantee that participants will be provided with an internship that meets their specific requests. Only internship hosts approved by the U.S. Department of State may host participants.

Participants will not be able to undertake independent research or other activities and will not be permitted to change their assigned internship once accepted to the program. Placement information is not available at the time of notification, and finalists will be required to accept or decline their award before their U.S. internship host is known. Placement information will be provided before the beginning of the program.

To fully benefit and learn from the program's immersion-style experience, it is necessary for participants to actively participate in their internship program. This entails daily attendance to work and completion of internship projects that are agreed upon by the intern and her internship mentor. Active participation creates a mutually beneficial experience for the intern as well as her host company. Listed below are expectations of an intern:

- Actively participate in the program as a responsible, dedicated intern;
- Work with assigned internship mentor to develop a internship work plan;
- Attend internship daily, any absence from work must be discussed and approved by the internship mentor and IREX;
- Take advantage of appropriate training and professional development opportunities; and
- Not accept payment during the internship or accept full time positions upon completion of the internship.

Participants will be notified of their internships placements prior to departing their home countries and will have the opportunity to correspond with their internship hosts before their internship begins. In addition, internship hosts will be provided with an information packet containing information regarding the program and the intern they will be hosting.

Alumnae Opportunities

Upon completion of the program and return home, participants will be awarded the status of "alumnae" and be invited to a conference in the Middle East region for all returned participants. Participants will be invited to join an alumnae listserv that regularly posts items of interest and professional opportunities and be asked to take part in and receive and the BIP News *Alumnae Newsletter*.

What do Alumnae Say about the Program?

- *We have better knowledge of our capacities and potential.*
- *We are more determined and confident.*
- *We realize that we are able to do much more than we used to do before the program and now we will go much further.*

What does the "two-year home residency requirement" mean? Will I be able to visit my friends in the United States during this time?

Yes. The program's "two-year home residency requirement" stipulates that one may not work or emigrate to the United States for two years following the fellowship program. However, one may visit the United States for short periods during that time on a tourist or business visa.