



INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK Florence

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	page 3
Note to Parents and Friends of Student Interns	page 3
Italy at a Glance	page 4
About CAPA Internships	page 6
Overview of the Internship Process	page 6
Getting Started: Filling out the Internship Application	page 8
Realistic Expectations	page 13
How to Create a Cover Letter	page 13
Sample Cover Letter	page 15
How to Create a Resume	page 17
Sample Resume	page 19
Important Paperwork	page 21
Internship Agreement	page 22
The Florence Internship Experience	page 24
Upon Arrival	page 24
Interview Technique	page 24
What to Wear to your Internship	page 25
Perspectives on Experiential Learning Abroad (PELA)	page 26
Working in Florence	page 27
Conversations in the Workplace	page 27
National Holidays	page 29
Making the Most of Your Experience	page 30
Reference Section	page 32
Important Websites for Interns	page 32
Suggested Reading for Interns	page 32

WELCOME

We are delighted that you have chosen to do an internship in Florence. As your program progresses, you will find that you are not only gaining invaluable INTERNATIONAL experience, but you will also be making important contacts as well as many new Italian friends.

You may find your first few days in Florence a little overwhelming as you acclimatise yourself to your host country and your new routine. Florence is different from many cities in the United States, and in many ways, things are done differently. Remember, you are the guest, and adapting to change will help to improve your career prospects. Patience and appreciation of cultural differences are key requirements, particularly during the first two weeks of your internship as your site gets to know you and how you work.

We want you to have a satisfying and successful internship and will do everything we can to facilitate this. In return, we ask that you come to Florence with realistic expectations and the right attitude. It is important that you are flexible, open-minded, and can take the initiative. We also ask that you communicate on a regular basis with us as well as with your site supervisor. It couldn't be easier; you will get out of your internship what you are willing to put into it.

Have a wonderful program and make it the best experience of your life.

Best wishes from all of us!!
The CAPA Florence Staff

A NOTE TO PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF STUDENT INTERNS

It is a good idea to share this handbook with your parents and family members, so that they have a comprehensive understanding of the internship process too.

While the on-campus Career Services is the formal avenue through which students can receive professional guidance, we recognize that many parents and family members also support and guide students as they develop their professional skills. In order to provide the best support possible and to set realistic expectations, it is a good idea for parents and family members to review this handbook as well.

You can help your student to have a successful internship abroad by recognizing that the internship application, placement, and interview process

are all important learning phases for students. Students who are encouraged to ask questions and self-advocate in a friendly, yet professional manner typically have positive and meaningful learning experiences. You will undoubtedly bolster your student's confidence and enhance his/her future career prospects by encouraging your student to practice these skills by making calls, e-mailing, or meeting with the CAPA staff, just as they would in their future professional positions.

The CAPA staff are approachable and knowledgeable professionals who are committed to helping your student develop professional skills. We are always happy to address any of your student's questions or concerns both prior to departure and while in-country, in order to ensure that your student has a successful international internship.

ITALY AT A GLANCE

The Basic Facts

Full name: Italian Republic

Population: 58.9 million (UN, 2007)

Capital: Rome

Area: 301,338 (116,346 miles sq)

Dominant language: Italian

Dominant religion: Christianity

Life expectancy: 78 years (men), 83 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: Euro

Main exports: Machinery and Transport Equipment, Chemicals, Clothes, Wine

GNI per capita: US \$37,600 (World Bank, 2006)

Government: Parliamentary Democratic Republic



President: Giorgio Napolitano

Giorgio Napolitano, a former Communist Party member, was sworn in as Italy's 11th post-war president in May 2006. As president he heads the armed forces and has powers to veto legislation, disband parliament and call elections.

Prime Minister: Silvio Berlusconi

Silvio Berlusconi began his third term as prime minister of Italy in May 2008, heading a centre-right coalition including his own Forza Italia party. Mr. Berlusconi first moved directly into politics in 1994 and has been a dominant figure on the right ever since. He built a business empire out of construction and media interests in his native Milan.

Diversity

In Italy you will find your new counterparts in the office to have diverse cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, races, sexual orientations and gender identities, religious beliefs, worldviews and more. You are also likely to encounter a wide range of perspectives regarding diversity issues just as you would within the U.S. Lately, Italy has been struggling to address issues revolving around multiculturalism, immigration and national identity. The U.S. faces a similar challenge. Take the time to understand various attitudes and beliefs that may be different from your own. This will significantly help you to better understand your own beliefs as well as those of your host culture.

ABOUT CAPA INTERNSHIPS

Who is CAPA?

CAPA International Education (CAPA) is a private international organization dedicated to providing US college and university students with affordable education abroad programs. We offer internship, service-learning, and study abroad programs in Italy, UK, France, Spain, Australia, and Costa Rica. The CAPA staff is comprised of committed professionals who look forward to providing you with friendly support and professional advising during your internship abroad. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you might have, both before you depart and while you are abroad. We are always happy to hear from you!

What is a CAPA Internship?

Your internship will provide you with a position where you can incorporate your academic knowledge and experience in the work place and further develop your professional skills. Most importantly, CAPA Internships allow you to focus on job training, career networking, and resume building in an *international* setting.

Why do an International Internship?

In today's complex world and competitive job market, the decision to do an *international* internship may be one of the most important decisions you make. An international internship provides you with an invaluable opportunity to gain intercultural work experience and boost your resume. You will be part of an experienced team and given the opportunity to enhance your professional skills and future career prospects.

How does CAPA find internship sites?

We carefully read your application, resume and cover letter and match you to our growing lists of participating sites based on your academic background, interests and previous work experience.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

1. Internships abroad are highly competitive, so it is wise to really invest time into putting together a professional cover letter and resume. *Please refer to the samples in this booklet. Complete your internship application and list your fields of interest. The CAPA Boston office will process your application materials and determine whether or not your cover letter and resume meet basic professional requirements.

2. If your internship application materials do not meet basic professional requirements, you will be contacted by CAPA and advised about improvements that can be made to your materials. You will need to make these changes quickly and re-submit your internship application materials right away. If your application materials meet professional requirements, the CAPA Boston office will send them on to the CAPA Internships Team in Italy.
3. The Internships Team in Florence has an extensive network of internship sites and contacts in every industry. Using the information you provided in your internship application, cover letter, and resume, the Internships Team will find prospective internship site placements that match your interest and experience. Due to sheer volume of intern applications that businesses and organizations receive, it usually takes about 2 months for CAPA to confirm a match with an internship site.
4. You will receive notification of your internship placement approximately 2 weeks prior to the start of your program. If you submit your application materials late, this will delay your placement confirmation. Occasionally there is a saturation of interns from a particular field (theatre for example). If this occurs, CAPA will work hard to confirm your placement as quickly as possible, but confirmation is likely to be delayed. *Please note that while your internship site has been tentatively confirmed, your internship is still contingent upon a successful interview in-country.
5. Once you arrive in Florence, you will have an orientation specific to interning in Florence. You will be advised about cultural differences in the workplace, open-mindedness, and etiquette. The CAPA Internships Team will be happy to answer any pending questions you have at this time with regards to working in Florence, or any specific concerns that you might have about your site.
6. You will have an in-person interview with your internship supervisor. Your site has only been *tentatively* confirmed at this point, so it is important that you take the interview seriously and prepare in professional manner. Dress appropriately and follow the interview technique guidelines outlined in this handbook.
7. At your interview, your supervisor will give you a better idea about the role that your internship site would like you to take on. You can also use that time as an opportunity to discuss your strengths, any particular interests you have, and what you would like to learn during your internship. The sites usually recognize the internships as a learning opportunity for students, so they may be willing to help you gain experience working on specific projects, but it is *important* to remember that the internship sites

have needs of their own and will also require your assistance with routine tasks.

GETTING STARTED: Filling Out the Internship Application

Warning: READ THIS SECTION CAREFULLY

The CAPA application form is designed to give the Internships Team as much information about you as possible. The more detail we have about your experience, interests and aspirations, the more closely we can match you to an appropriate site. How you fill in the form is therefore essential.

Follow this step-by-step guide and you will have the perfect application. Please refer to the sample application following the step-by-step guidelines in this section.

Page One:

Student Information

Fill in **all** your personal details including your age.

NOTE: In Italy, your date of birth is included on all applications, so please fill this in.

NOTE: CAPA will need to contact you about your placement via email, so please make sure you list an email address you check on a regular basis.

Emergency Contact Information

Please list one emergency contact person that the CAPA staff can contact in case of emergency. Please verify the telephone number with your emergency contact before sending in your application.

Page Two:

School Information

Please fill in all the information pertaining to your university/college in the US. If you require any accommodations for a disability, make sure that you check the appropriate box and attach further documentation from your university disability services office.

Course Work

List all courses taken that are **relevant** to your internship areas **by course title**. Do not list courses by course number. Remember to include courses relevant to any of the three areas of interest you have listed. **Do not just concentrate on your first choice.**

Experience

Give as much detail as you can about the kind of experience gained in each position where you have worked. Do not simply list a job title. Use bullet points for each specific duty and skill required in each role. **Where possible, relate your experience to your areas of interest.**

Example:

1. **Internship for Any Place Ltd (Marketing Dept)**

- Organized a mail shot to prospective company clients
- Created and updated client database
- Made follow up calls
- Participated in business meetings and researched clients and competitors on the internet
- Assisted with day to day administration

2. **Publicity Officer for Any Place University Debating Club**

- Organized and planned meetings
- Media liaison with University newspaper and television
- Special event planning and coordination
- Reporting to committee

3. **Cashier at Any Place Groceries**

- Greeted customers and assisted them with their purchases
- Kept shelves stocked and ensured the store was in a clean and tidy condition
- Opened up on certain occasions and often counted cash and closed store
- Maintained a customer database

Page Three:

Placement Areas and Types of Work

This is the **MOST IMPORTANT** section of the application form. Your options may be severely limited if you do not fill out each section carefully. You cannot afford to be too vague. This will invariably result in an internship that is only vaguely in your area of interest.

For example:

- 1) *Marketing*
- 2) *Real Estate*
- 3) *Theatre*

This list reflects the choice of someone who hasn't really decided what they want.

If Marketing was your primary area of study, choose which aspect of it most interests you. Then offer some generalized alternatives for your second and third choices.

For example:

- 1) *Sports Marketing*
- 2) *Marketing*
- 3) *Public Relations*

Never be overly specific however, as this offers the internships team no scope.

For example:

- 1) *Sports Marketing for Serie A Fiorentina*
- 2) *Sports Marketing for a soccer team*
- 3) *Sports Marketing*

Never quote specific companies as a choice. If you have a particular company in mind, mention it only as a possibility. For example: *Theatre (if possible with Teatro Pergola or Teatro Comunale)*

Be aware that certain internships are only available to students with experience in the field. Internships within high profile corporate companies, for instance, are extremely competitive and only the top applicants with the most extensive experience will usually be considered.

Internships in creative fields such as journalism, broadcasting, graphic design and theatre, etc., do not guarantee creative input. Creative fields do, however, require you to submit an electronic portfolio containing samples of your work. **If you are applying for internships in any of these fields, please make sure you read the "Realistic Expectations" section of this handbook following the sample application.**

Example:

Placement Areas / Type of Work

Please list your desired areas of work in order of preference. You must list all three areas. Please note that it may be necessary to place you in any of the three areas you list.

1. **Marketing (event planning)**
2. **General Marketing**
3. **Public Relations**

What are your future career plans?

Be as informative as you can, but be open. If you have no specific aspirations, say so. If you have a very clearly defined career path, let us know that also. The more information we have, the better our match will be. Have reasonable expectations, though. Internships in Italy are very different from what you may have experienced elsewhere, and some steps you may be anxious to take to advance your career may just not be feasible within the internship environment.

Example:

What are your future career plans and how will your internship placement area relate to these plans?

My career plans are to go into the marketing field, but I have not yet decided in which direction I want to go beyond that. I find events marketing and planning particularly interesting and would ideally like the opportunity to see how the industry works first hand and also gain an international perspective. I feel that the opportunity to expand my knowledge of the communications field will be beneficial to my career and I would enjoy the chance to explore areas that I have not yet encountered. Public Relations, for instance, is a field I have considered as a possible career option.

What type of duties do you expect?

All realistic expectations will be met by any of our sites. The type of work will vary, however, depending on the site and your particular assignment. Some sites offer team projects, others offer individual projects and still others will offer experience helping out on a day-to-day basis. Some will involve client contact, and some may not. If you have a particular preference for the type of work you want to do, let us know and we will do our best to meet your expectations.

Example:

What type of duties do you expect to be given?

I anticipate doing fairly straightforward tasks to begin with in the hope that as I demonstrate my ability I will be given more complex work. Assisting a professional on a specific project would be an ideal way to learn and develop my skills. I would hope that I would be given as wide a variety of experiences as possible, although I would of course expect a certain amount of "grunt work."

Additional Information

Tell us everything that may be a selling point, such as: computer skills, languages, academic prizes and particular interests. If you have lived or studied abroad or visited Italy before, it will be of interest to our placement sites.

Example:

Please provide any additional information that will assist us in locating the most appropriate and rewarding placement for you. Include any special skills you may have, i.e. computers, languages, strengths, personal qualities, interests etc. (Use an additional sheet if necessary)

Computer skills

*Microsoft Office
Excel
Access
PowerPoint*

Languages

*French (6 years)
I studied in France for a semester*

Strengths and Skills

*Organized
Reliable
Team Player
Uses Initiative
Trustworthy
Good Problem Solver*

Academic Awards

Dean's List

Interests

Public speaking, tennis, reading, theatre and politics

Political Affiliation

If you are seeking a political placement please be clear if you have any strong beliefs that might affect your placement.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Now that you have completed your application, re-read it and consider how realistic your expectations are.

The success of your internship is dependent on you! CAPA can provide you with the opportunity to have a really rewarding business and cultural experience but cannot guarantee that your internship will be perfect. If you arrive with unrealistic expectations, you will almost certainly be disappointed. **In certain areas opportunity is limited.**

Theatre interns are never going to act; broadcasting interns are unlikely to have the opportunity to work a camera. Finance majors will probably not be placed at major name-brand companies unless they have an exceptionally strong background and **previous experience**. There are limitations also on legal, medical and creative internships as well as in counseling. Keep an open mind in order to get the most out of your internship experience. Competition for all placements is stiff and CAPA operates on a strictly first come, first served basis.

HOW TO CREATE A COVER LETTER

A good cover letter is an important part of the internship application process. Your cover letter may make the difference between obtaining an internship interview and having your resume overlooked, so it makes good sense to devote the necessary time and effort to writing an effective cover letter. A cover letter should complement, not duplicate your resume. Its purpose is to interpret the data-oriented, factual resume and add a personal touch creating a critical first impression. Below is a step-by-step guide to writing a cover letter designed to help simplify what can sometimes seem a daunting task.

1. Start with your name, address and e-mail address on the left of the paper.
2. Don't forget to put the date and place you are writing from on the left of the page

3. Begin the letter with "*Egregi Signor?*"
4. The cover letter should be in Italian – it is a good idea to have your Italian professor double check it before sending it off to ensure it is perfect. You should also include a cover letter in English.
5. The first paragraph should state who you are, what you are studying (you major, any concentration and minor,) and give some indication of the type of internship you want. Do not be too specific, just state generally what you are looking for.
6. In the second paragraph you should just say what your strengths are and give reasons for wanting to do an internship in the fields you have chosen.
7. Remember that the Cover Letter is the first impression that you will give to the company; however, do not let it get too long as you may lose the reader's interest, and it is in the resume that they will find the information they need.

Sample Cover Letter in Italian:

Giulio Cesare
g.cesare@aol.com

24, Roosevelt Ave
23456 (NY) – USA

1500, College Ave
12543 (NY) - USA

NY, 27 maggio 2008

Egregi Signori,

Sono uno studente dell' Università del Nord America e partecipo al programma di Internship organizzato da CAPA (Centres for Academic Programs Abroad) e dalla mia Università. Fequento il terzo anno; le materie previste dal mio corso di studi sono Economia e Marketing con una specializzazione in Gestione di Impresa.

Con la presente sono a richiedere di poter inserirmi nella Vostra Azienda per un periodo di tre mesi e mezzo a partire da settembre 2006. Come potrete notare dal mio Curriculum Vitae, qui allegato, ho una buona conoscenza della lingua italiana come anche esperienza lavorativa nel mio ambito di studi.

In attesa di incontrarvi in occasione del colloquio iniziale,

Vogliate gradire i miei più distinti saluti,

Giulio Cesare

Sample Cover Letter in English

Giulio Cesare
g.cesare@aol.com

24 Roosevelt Ave
New York, NY 23456 USA

1500 College Ave
New York, NY 12543 USA

May 27, 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a student from the University of North America, and I am currently participating in an internship program organized by CAPA, in partnership with my university. I am a third year student; my field of study is Economics, and I am majoring in Management.

I am writing to you to kindly ask to be admitted to the Internship Department of your Company for a three-month period ,starting September 2008. In my Resume, here attached, you will see that I have a good knowledge of the Italian language and professional experience in my field of study.

I look forward to meeting you soon for my interview.

Sincerely,

Giulio Cesare

HOW TO CREATE A RESUME

A resume is a summary of your education, skills, accomplishments and experience that a potential internship site will use to help gauge whether or not you are fit for a particular position. Following are some guidelines on how to create a resume to accompany your internship application, and a sample for your reference. It is not necessarily the only approach, but has proven to be the most effective in CAPA's experience with our placement sites.

- **Resume Length:** Your resume should be no longer than one page in length. Include relevant and important accomplishments, but do it in as few words as possible. A vigorous, concise resume will be examined more carefully than a long-winded one. Graphics are a distraction, so avoid using them.
- **Paper:** CAPA keeps all the original documents and faxes or posts photocopies to our sites. Do not worry about purchasing expensive paper, but make sure the paper is of a standard 8 ½" by 11" size.
- **Font:** Use a standard font such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Courier, no smaller than 10pt, and no larger than 14 pt.
- **Bullet Points:** These make lists easier to read and give your resume a sense of cohesion.
- **Be Positive:** If you achieved something, say so, but don't exaggerate to the point of misrepresentation.
- **Proofread:** Proofread all documentation. It is often helpful to have a second set of eyes review your work.
- **Be Consistent:** Ensure the layout, punctuation, etc. is consistent throughout. For example: if you put a period at the end of a bullet point, ensure you put one at the end of all bullet points.

Step-by-Step Guide to Creating a Resume

1. Start with your name in **bold** in the center of the page. Use the exact same heading on your cover letter.
2. Place your college address on the left and your permanent address on the right. Include your telephone numbers and e-mail address.
3. For the first heading, list your education, including your major and any minors as well as your GPA.
4. List any courses you have taken that are relevant to the internship subject you wish to pursue.
5. List any leadership positions, clubs, and awards you have received

IMPORTANT NOTE: In Italy, affiliation with sororities and fraternities can be viewed negatively. It is also important to know that in Italy, faith is viewed as an intensely private matter. Italians do not make reference to it in job applications. You may want to take these cultural differences into consideration when writing your resume.

6. List your work experience in reverse chronological order, listing most recent positions first. Be sure to include the dates of employment.
7. List any languages you speak other than English as well as your competency level.
8. List all of your skills and interests including computer software experience.

Sample Resume in Italian

Giulio Cesare

g.cesare@aol.com

Permanent Address

Street
City, State, ZIP

University Address

Street
City, State, ZIP

Formazione Accademica

North America University

Settembre 2004 – Presente
Diploma di laurea in Marketing

Your High School

Settembre 1999 – Giugno 2008
Diploma di Scuola Superiore

Corsi Di Specializzazione

Marketing e Economia

Esperienze Professionali

Any Town Bank

Maggio 2004 - Settembre 2004
Titolo di lavoro: Servizio Clienti

Funzioni:

- *Describe your duties using bullet points and focus on those relevant to your area of interest*
- Provided a high level of customer service to bank customers
- Was responsible for balancing the register at the end of the day

Ristorante “Il gatto e la volpe” (New York)

Febbraio 2003 – Marzo 2003
Titolo di lavoro: Cameriere

Funzioni:

- *Describe your duties using bullet points and focus on those relevant to your area of interest*

Lingue

Inglese: madrelingua
Italiano: livello avanzato
Spagnolo: livello principiante

CONOSCENZE INFORMATICHE

Ottima/buona/sufficiente conoscenza di Windows 2000, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Access

ALTRE ESPERIENZE RILEVANTI

Describe here any other experience that you feel might be relevant to describe you; i.e. Volunteer Work, Experiences Abroad, etc.

HOBBIES

Pesca, fotografia, calcio

Sample Resume in English

Giulio Cesare

g.cesare@aol.com

Permanent Address

Street
City, State, ZIP

University Address

Street
City, State, ZIP

EDUCATION

North American University

September 2004 to Present
BA in Marketing (be sure to list any minors also)

Your High School

September 2000 – June 2004
High School Diploma

SPECIALIZATIONS

Marketing and Economics

- *Always specify when and where you attended these courses*

EMPLOYMENT

Any Town Bank

May 2004 – September 2004
Job title: Customer Care Assistant

Duties:

- Provided a high level of customer service to bank customers
- Was responsible for balancing the register at the end of the day
- *Describe your duties using bullet points and focus on those relevant to your area of interest*

Ristorante “Il gatto e la volpe” (New York)

February 2003 – March 2003
Job title: Waiter

Duties:

- *Describe your duties using bullet points and focus on those relevant to your area of interest*

LANGUAGES

- English: Mother-tongue
- Italian: Advanced
- Spanish: Beginning

QUALIFICATIONS

Excellent/good/average knowledge of Windows 2000, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Access.

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCES

Describe here any other experience that you feel might be relevant to describe yourself; i.e. Volunteer Work, Experiences Abroad, etc.

HOBBIES

Fishing, Photography, Soccer.

IMPORTANT PAPERWORK

With all that you need to pack for your semester abroad, there are important papers that you will need for your internship that you will not want to leave at home.

- 1- **This handbook.** This book will be your best friend during your internship experience, acting as your reference guide and your means to organizing and keeping track of your internship experience.
- 2- Copies of your **updated resume.** It is a good idea to email a copy of your resume to yourself and store it on a USB drive.
- 3- **Letters of recommendation.** At your interview your potential supervisor may request references from a previous employer, so having a good recommendation handy is a good idea.
- 4- **A police check.** You must attach a police check to your internship application. It is also wise to make a copy of your police check and all other paperwork you submit with your internship application. Visit your on-campus police or local police station in your town. Explain that you are required to submit a background check in order to participate in an internship abroad. The process varies between police stations, but often times you will be required to present yourself in person and pay a modest fee to have this police check performed (\$5-\$20), while in other locations this is done free of charge.
- 5- **A portfolio** containing writing samples, graphic designs, artwork, photography, fashion designs, theatre productions, or anything else that could represent past work experience you may have. This is always good to bring to an interview or to have on hand for networking purposes.

INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT

The internship agreement is a critical part of your completed internship application packet. It is included along with your internship application, and must be signed and returned along with your application. Here is a sample copy of the Internship Agreement for your reference.

INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT

1. Internships are **non-paying**.
2. You should be aware that while we try to secure a placement within an area you specify, there is no guarantee that we can find a placement that exactly meets your expectations and you may be placed in an alternate, but related area.
3. Your placement is expected to provide a site supervisor, who will serve as your point of contact and advise you on work related issues. It is the intern's responsibility to maximize that opportunity by observing the practices of the workplace and asking pertinent questions.
4. The CAPA Internship Supervisor is there to help you and act as a liaison between yourself and the site. You should feel free to contact the CAPA Supervisor for advice and assistance during office hours. An appointment should be made when a meeting is required.
5. You will be required to commit to a minimum number of hours as stipulated by your program. This will be reconfirmed at the internship orientation in Italy.
6. Completion and return, to the CAPA internship staff, of the 'Internship Interview Feedback Form' is mandatory.
7. Internships hours do not include traveling time. Expect to spend ***at least*** an hour commuting.
8. An intern is expected to demonstrate an acceptable degree of competence and initiative before being given more meaningful tasks.
9. If issues arise, it is the intern's responsibility to initiate dialogue with their site supervisor and inform CAPA internship staff.
10. It is your site supervisor's prerogative to make changes to your duties and assign you other tasks.
11. Interns are expected to maintain acceptable standards of dress, behavior, and respect in interaction with colleagues, supervisors and managers.
12. Interns must follow all conditions of employment at their internship site.

13. You are required to inform your supervisor at your internship site of any planned or unplanned absences or tardiness. Missed hours must be made up.
14. At the beginning of every program there is a compulsory internship orientation.
15. Interns must attend their interview at the stated time.
16. **Sites retain the right to refuse an intern on the basis of their interview.** There will be no refund in this instance. CAPA will provide a second placement opportunity.
17. In the event of an internship being terminated, the Internship Supervisor will assess the individual situation and act accordingly. There will be no refunds. An alternative site will be provided only if the circumstance is deemed appropriate.
18. The CAPA Internship Supervisor has the right to terminate an internship at any time if there is evidence or communication from the internship site that the student has failed to meet his or her basic responsibilities. The decision is final and may not be appealed. Under such circumstances the student will be removed from the CAPA program. There will be no refund.

I have read the above conditions and agree to abide by them.

Intern _____ Date ____/____/____

Internship Supervisor _____ Date ____/____/____

THE FLORENCE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

UPON ARRIVAL IN FLORENCE

Upon arrival at the CAPA Florence Center you will be greeted by the CAPA staff and introduced to life and work in Florence at your orientation sessions. The Internships Team will be happy to address any questions or concerns that you may have. They will also advise you about how to effectively prepare for a professional interview in Florence. Remember that your placement is only tentatively confirmed before your interview. Your in-person interview will be scheduled for you in the day or week following your orientation session.

You may find your first few days in-country to be a little overwhelming as you acclimatize yourself to your host country and your new routine. Remember, you are the guest and adapting to change will help to improve your career prospects. Patience and appreciation of cultural differences are key requirements, particularly during the first two weeks of your internship, as your site gets to know you and your work.

We want you to have a satisfying and successful internship and will do everything we can to facilitate this. In return, we know that you will have realistic expectations and a positive attitude. It is important that you are flexible and it is imperative that you communicate on a regular basis with us as well as with your site supervisor. You only get out of your internship what you are willing to put into it. Have a wonderful term and make it the best experience of your life!

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

Preparation is key.

Research your site in advance: its history, its products or services, its size, geographical location and its competitors. Try to anticipate some of the questions you may be asked in the interview and work out the best answers. Decide on your strengths and weaknesses and determine how you are going to express them as positively as possible.

Always be on time.

Avoid arriving late and getting flustered, but be wary of arriving too early and getting overanxious.

First impressions make all the difference.

Be smartly dressed, but feel comfortable in what you are wearing. When you meet your interviewer establish eye contact, smile and give a firm handshake. Try to demonstrate confidence and enthusiasm, but avoid sounding arrogant.

Sell yourself.

Speak clearly and sit in a relaxed but alert position. Leaning slightly towards your interviewer demonstrates interest in what they are saying. Avoid speaking too slowly, as this sounds dozy or too quickly as this sounds neurotic. Avoid “waffling” or repeating yourself, and try to answer each part of a question. Use any research you have done in the interview. Be wary of one-word answers: they do not come across well.

Don't let your body language let you down.

Try to mirror the interviewer's body language. Adopt a similar posture to theirs. This helps build up a rapport and should make them more responsive to you. Try to match your interviewer's demeanor. If serious, be formal and professional, if relaxed and humorous, be the same. It is advisable not to chew gum at the interview.

Some good advice:

We recommend that you seek out your internship site before the day of your interview. Since you are not yet familiar with Florence, take the time to learn how to get to your site and time how long your commute will be. Purchasing an A-Z map book of Florence is often a good idea and it is the best way to navigate your way through the city.

WHAT TO WEAR TO YOUR INTERNSHIP

Although codes of dress are generally becoming more relaxed in Florence, there are still expected standards of dress to follow in certain sectors. Here is a very general guide to business dress in Florence. However, the best advice is to observe how your colleagues are dressed as organizations even within the same fields can have differing dress codes.

Business Smart

This is the most formal dress code and is most common in the most professional organizations/industries. Men will generally dress in a business suit (plain grey, black or dark blue), shirt and tie. For females, a plain skirt suit and closed-toe shoes is the norm. Shirts and blouses should always be pressed.

Fields included but not limited to: Financial industry, banking, insurance, law, or business management.

Business Casual

Men are still required to dress in suit and tie but these may be patterned and more colorful. Women's attire can be less formal and include trouser suits.

Fields included but not limited to: Media presentations, human resources, financial services.

Smart Casual

For men, this generally means a jacket and slacks. A tie may be required or an open necked collared shirt may suffice. In colder weather, a smart sweater may be worn. For women, dress pants and blouses/sweaters are appropriate though nothing should be too tight or revealing. Sandals or sneakers are not acceptable for either gender.

Fields included but not limited to: Advertising, public relations, marketing, recruitment, publishing, fashion, education, and hospitals.

Casual

More companies are beginning to adopt a casual dress code. The expected standard of dress, however, can vary greatly from place to place. As a general rule, jeans should be in good condition (not ripped or soiled) as should your top. Many companies prefer you to wear sleeved tops rather than T-shirts.

Fields included but not limited to: Music, theater arts, broadcasting, or academic research

PERSPECTIVES ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ABROAD (PELA)

Internship students are required to participate in a seminar series entitled “Perspectives on Experiential Learning Abroad.” Faculty act as internship mentors to ensure that participants have academic guidance during their internships. The first session will be a two-hour Intern Orientation followed by weekly sessions of one hour each.

The objective of this course is to increase each student's awareness and understanding of the culture, the people, and the work environment in which they are interning.

Handouts, role-plays, and discussions will be used to help each student reflect on their individual internship experience.

WORKING IN FLORENCE

Florence is well known for its art, history and for being one of the most visited cities of Italy. For this reason, many job opportunities are found in the areas of art, handicrafts, restoration and tourism. Fashion and design also play an important role in the economy of Florence, and Florence is also home to the largest pharmaceutical industry in Italy.

Conversations in the Office

Office chat – what are they all talking about?

So you have arrived at your site and are just beginning to settle in. You know where the coffee is, who your colleagues are and where the local sandwich shop is. What you need to know now is what on earth they are all talking about. Here are a few tips on the most talked about issues in a Florentine office

Sports

- Soccer (*calcio*) This is the number one sport in Italy. Fiorentina is the local team in Florence. You will find most people watching and discussing a game whenever the Fiorentina team is playing against the Juventus team (from Torino).
- The Formula 1 races are also very popular since Italians are very proud of their *Ferrari* cars.
- Bicycling is also popular during the Giro d' Italia and the Tour de France.

Politics (la politica)

This is a very common topic in daily office conversation. The huge number of different political parties means the opportunity for discussion is nearly endless.

The Weather (il tempo)

Here are a few sentences that people use to discuss the weather.

Che caldo fa! – It's so hot

Che freddo fa! – It's so cold

La temperatura si sta abbassando! – Temperatures are going down

La temperatura sta salendo! – The temperature is rising

Sto scoppiando! – I'm boiling

Sto congelando! – I'm freezing

Language (la lingua)

Florentine people are very proud of their language and their use of the "correct" Italian. If you travel to other parts of Italy, you may start to distinguish between the various Italian accents.

Lunch Time (il pranzo)

Conducting business at lunch is very common, especially when meeting other companies. Don't bring a lawyer or a power-point business plan - just be sure to have a large appetite and be prepared to chat about politics, soccer, etc. over a few bottles of wine. A good lunch means more to an Italian than any contractual deal.

Outside of business meetings, it is very common to consume lunch on a bench with a nice *panino* (sandwich).

Reading & Current Affairs (La lettura)

Italians read a lot. Almost everyone in Florence reads some sort of newspaper. These range from quality "broadsheets" to sensationalist "tabloids." Different papers cater to different educational levels and cultural backgrounds and generally have a fairly fixed political stance. The news they carry tends to be far more international than the American press and, as a result, Italians are likely to have a far greater understanding of international affairs.

As an American, your alternative take on any given subject will be of genuine interest to your colleagues. To avoid looking ill-informed, it is a good idea to acquaint yourself with the news of the day.

Getting to Work

The most common mean of transportation in Florence is the bus (the local city company is called ATAF). Florence is not a big city so a bicycle or simply walking might be a nice alternative to the busy buses. The industrial area of Florence is located outside the city centre, so you definitely need a bus to reach these areas. Being mainly a medieval city with very narrow streets, traffic in Florence can be very chaotic at peak hours. Discussions of the day's commute are also common within the Italian workplace.

The Italian attitude to work

Although it very much depends on the type of company you have joined, you will probably notice that attitudes to work are much more relaxed in Italy than in the US. While you may find that office hours and break times tend to be more structured in the US, in Italy they like to take things a little easier, finding time for a chat and a cup of coffee and perhaps working later. The job gets done either way, but they like to think their days are just a little less stressful.

Florence

Florence is located in Tuscany (central Italy). The city is surrounded by hills and the climate is characterized by hot humid summers and cool winters.

Florence is a cultural and artistic destination; its origin dates back to the Romans. Its highlights are the medieval center and its charming Renaissance palaces. You can start to discover Florence from **Piazza della Repubblica**, a lively square in the middle of the city centre. Next to **Piazza della Repubblica**, you will find the religious heart of Florence with its imposing **Duomo** (as all Florentines refer to the Cathedral), the **Baptistry**, and **Giotto's Bell Tower**.

If you walk from **Piazza della Repubblica** towards the **Arno river**, you will find the **Palazzo Vecchio**, the **Ponte Vecchio** and the **Uffizi Gallery**.

You can also access the South Bank of the river from one of the beautiful bridges (**Ponte Vecchio**, **Ponte Santa Trinita**, **Ponte alla Carraia**); this part of Florence is less touristy than the others, with hidden masterpieces such as **Palazzo Pitti** (the last residence of the Medici family) with its amazing **Boboli garden**, the **Santo Spirito Church**, the **Carmine Church** with the **Cappella Brancacci**, and the **Piazzale Michelangelo** with its beautiful view over Florence. In the South Bank you also find some of the nicest restaurants and bars of Florence, usually buzzing with young people on Fridays and Saturdays.

Remember that despite the first impression, Florence is not a big city and walking is the best way to discover its hidden treasures!!

National Holidays

Easter Sunday & Easter Monday vary every year; Florence local bank holiday is June 24th.

January 1	New Year's Day
January 6	Epiphany
March/April	Easter Sunday & Easter Monday
April 25	Liberation Day
May 1	Labor Day
June 2	Republic Day
June 24	Florence Patron Saint (St. John)
August 15	Feast of the Assumption
November 1	All Saints' Day
December 8	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	St. Stephen's Day

"Ponte" is a common term used in Italy when it comes to holidays. *"Ponte"* is when a holiday falls on Thursday or Tuesday and the day between the weekend is made a free day that bridges the holiday to the weekend. Not every company or organizations give *ponte* and they vary from year to year, all depending on what day of the week the holiday is on.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

Please read this carefully. It will ensure you have as rewarding an internship as possible.

Your internship should be viewed as a way to submerge yourself into the Italian culture and gain a better understanding of the Italian workplace. Internships in Florence are approached quite differently from those in the US and this cultural and social exposure should be at the forefront of your mind as you embark on this new experience.

An internship abroad is much more than a resume-builder. Swallowing your pride and winning the respect of your co-workers and your site supervisor is your greatest immediate challenge. Please remember that one semester is a very short time.

You must demonstrate the ability to use your **initiative** and show that you are a **competent** worker before you will be issued with real responsibilities. If you do not demonstrate that you are a capable worker, you may spend the internship being a "gofer" or doing "grunt work."

Below are some recommendations and suggestions to help you make the most of your internship.

Be patient and flexible

Things will be different to what you are used to and it may take awhile before you are trusted to take on greater responsibility. Remember that you are learning about a new culture no matter what your tasks.

Confront and discard your expectations

Your expectations about the internship will bear little resemblance to reality. Focus on reality and try to discard any misguided preconceptions as soon as possible.

Observation is the key. Keep your eyes & ears open

Gain an insight into Italian culture by observing how your colleagues interact and how work is approached.

Learning more at your internship site

Show that you are enthusiastic and interested in learning. Ask what, why, how, when? If told “I’m too busy to explain this to you,” ask if you can watch. Then later describe the process as you saw it and ask if you got it right.

Talk with your colleagues

Discuss the internship site; their role within the organization; how you may assist them; your goals for the internship experience and future career aims

Do not judge everything by your own standards

Most people are conditioned to think that their way of doing things is the best way. Try to overcome your innate prejudices and accept that there is more than one way of looking at something.

Be professional, dedicated and conscientious

Arrive on time and inform your site beforehand if you are going to be late.

Be independent and responsible

Unlike in the classroom, once you take on a responsibility you will be on your own. The consequences of irresponsibility are far greater than they would be in class and your negligence could cost the organization time, clients or profits.

Reflect thoughtfully on your experience

Make regular journal and achievement log entries.

Communication is essential

Remember to keep in contact with the internship coordinator and the site supervisor. Do not let problems build up. They can often be solved, if nipped in the bud and dealt with in good time.

Remember that you are a guest

You have been given the opportunity to help the site meet its professional goals. Do not expect to “take over” and become indispensable to your site.

Always follow up on a task

See if you met the regular standards for the task. Did you complete the task as planned? If not, why?

Be creatively assertive

If necessary, clarify your role with your supervisor. Ask to become involved in areas of the organization that interest you. Contribute to proceedings without being asked. Demonstrate your true worth. Don’t wait to be told everything and don’t allow yourself to start thinking “There is nothing I can do.”

Try to look at the overall picture

The internship experience lasts up to 13 weeks. Look beyond the moment and try to appreciate the whole picture. After all, when you look back on your internship, it is the overall picture that will stay with you and not the minutiae of your daily tasks.

AND ENJOY YOURSELF!!

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR INTERNS

Academic & Work Related

www.internshipprograms.com

www.capa.org

www.internships4america.com

www.careerplanning.about.com

www.careertalk.com

www.studyabroad.com

www.sportellostage.it

www.jobtel.it

Getting to know Florence

www.firenzeturismo.it

www.firenze.net

www.comune.firenze.it

www.ataf.net

SUGGESTED READING LIST

The Five Minute Interview

Second Edition

Richard H. Beatty

John Wiley & Sons, INC. 1998

The Successful Internship Transformation and Empowerment

H. Federick Sweitzer

Mary A. King

Brooks/Cole Publishing Company 1999

The Cultural Experience

Ethnography in Complex Society

James P. Spradley, David W. McCurdy

Internship Success

Real world, step-by-step advice on getting the most out of your internship
Marianne Ehrlich Green 1998

The Back Door Guide to Short Term Job Adventures

Internships, Extraordinary Experiences, seasonal jobs, volunteering, and
work abroad
Michael Lands 1997

The Imaginative Souls Guide to Foreign Internships

A roadmap to envision, create and arrange your own experience.
Laura Hitchcock 1993

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