



University students from the United States who are taking part in an internship program in China learn how to pick tea at a farm in Zhenjiang, East China's Jiangsu province.

## Foreign interns seek experience in Chinese firms

By CHEN XIN  
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More foreign youths are seeking internships in China as the country's economic growth remains robust and businesses become more open to foreign interns.

Katherine Harris, from Britain, is a university student majoring in risk management. She came to China in May and has just completed an internship as a research specialist at the Beijing-based British Chamber of Commerce in China.

"There are a lot of internship opportunities in China but in the UK and other European countries there aren't many," the 20-year-old said.

Harris' internship lasted for two months and she was paid 2,500 yuan (\$394) each month.

"I plan to take another internship in the commerce or finance field in China during the summer vacation next year, and I also want to find a job in the country after my graduation," she said. "I'm quite interested in Chinese language and culture."

Katsuhiko Kayama, 23, from Japan, studies marketing in the United States. He is now working as an intern at Digital Jungle, a social media marketing company in Beijing.

"I was born in China but left when I was 6. I'm taking an internship here because on one hand, I want to seek my roots, and on the other, the industry is growing fast here. I really like the company I'm working for, and I hope I can stay and work here after my graduation next year," he said.

Peter Hao, executive director with UOutlook Education International, a Shanghai internship service company, said they have organized internships for 60 foreign youths from the United States and European, South Asian and South American countries this year.

"We expect more young people to seek internships in China over the next few months during the summer vacation. I'm sure the number of interns for the whole year will exceed that in last year," he said.

Hao said most people who seek internships in China are university students, and major in fields as diverse as engineering, biology, economics, finance and marketing.

Hao said, depending on what their field of study is, students seek different experiences. Engineering technology students want the chance to take part in project development, students majoring in public relations want to participate in designing and organizing activities, business students want to get involved in foreign trade.

He said his agency has connections with many organizations, including colleges in foreign countries and more than 100 privately run and foreign enterprises, non-governmental organizations and language training institutions in China.

Cao Enyu, business development manager of Getin2China Group, an internship service company in Beijing, said his company has introduced nearly 300 foreign interns to China this year and he believes that number will surpass 500 by the end of the year.

China's visa policy allows foreigners stay a maximum of six months to complete an internship.

"We pick companies for candidates based on their majors and willingness and then arrange phone or online interviews. If the two sides reach an agreement, employers will send candidates an invitation to facilitate their visa procedure," said Cao.

Cao said candidates normally apply for an internship visa ranging from one to three months but they can prolong their internships with permission from both the employers and police authorities.

"What we can do is supervising visa expirations of foreign youths and helping them prolong their visa terms or change visa types in line with their requirements," said Lin Song, a publicity officer at the exit-entry administration of the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau.

"They (foreign interns) must come to our office for their visa transaction. We'll collect their

information when they come for the visa, and we'll remind them with text messages when their prolonged visa is about to expire," he said.

If foreign interns are offered a job, they have to change their visa type from internship to employment, otherwise they will be suspected of staying illegally in the country or being illegally employed, Lin said.

Cao said about 30 percent of interns are hired by the Chinese companies where they worked.

Meng Ling, a partner with Perfect Alliance CPA Partnership, a Shanghai accounting firm, said they have hired foreign interns ever since they opened for business in 2006.

Meng said the company currently has two foreign interns working as audit assistants, one from Singapore, the other from Britain.

"Foreign interns not only bring different cultures, they're also helpful in improving English communication in the office," he said. "We're impressed by their patience and carefulness, which is quite important for our work. And our staff members can learn those good qualities from them."

Meng said companies like his, whose clients are mainly foreign enterprises, always hire foreign interns.

Gu Lili, a manager with International Students Travel Exchange in Beijing, said they expect the numbers of foreign interns in China to continue to rise. Last year the company helped more than 100 students intern in China.

"As China sustains a quick economic growth and Western markets weaken, and Chinese enterprises become more open to the outside world, more foreigners will seek internships in China," she said.

Gu said one of the recruitment projects her company is promoting is a beer festival at a tourism resort in Beijing scheduled in August, which needs some 20 foreign interns to work as receptionists and waiters.

Cao Yin contributed to this story.

## 'Tough part of job is getting a visa'

By ZHOU WENTING  
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Park Hye-ryoung said she hopes to find work in Shanghai after her graduation from Fudan University, but she wonders about her chances of getting a work visa.

"I know it's difficult to get a Z visa (work visa) in China," said the 24-year-old student from South Korea who will graduate next year.

"Work experience in a big financial institution in Shanghai will boost my career path," she said.

Park is one of many job-hunting foreigners. More than 27 percent of foreign students in universities in Shanghai hope to find employment in China after graduation, according to a recent survey, but most of them are worried about getting a work visa.

The survey was conducted by the culture and education commission under the Shang-

hai Municipal Committee of the Jiu San Society, one of the eight non-Communist parties in China. Nearly 1,000 foreign students studying in local universities in 2010 were polled.

"We have seen not only a sharp rise in the number of students from Japan and South Korea who are trying to land a local job, but also many from Spain and Italy this year, which was very rare several years ago," said Cao Enyu, business development manager of Getin2China Group, a company in Beijing that helps foreigners get internships and work opportunities in China.

However, some visa requirements, such as at least two years of work experience, are stamping out new graduates' hopes of getting work visas.

Moe Moe Tun, a student from Myanmar who majors in journalism at Fudan University, said that years ago an alumnus returned to Myanmar after graduation and worked there for two years just to meet the job experience requirement. He

finally returned to China.

Twenty-two-year-old Moe Moe Tun hopes she won't have to return home. "The journalism industry in my country is not so developed as it is in China. That's the main reason I want to stay here."

"Moreover, the salary (in Myanmar) doesn't compare with what's paid here," she said.

Under Chinese policies, a foreigner must have a job offer from an employer in China before a work visa can be issued.

Not all companies are qualified to hire foreign staff, said Xu Jie, a senior consultant at the international training center of Shanghai Foreign Service Co, a recruitment service provider for overseas businesses in Shanghai.

Qualified companies "must be registered in Shanghai and have assets registered in the city, and the amount of registered assets must meet a certain threshold," Xu said.

Many foreigners can tell painful stories about how frustrated they were when applying

for work visa.

"I know foreign people working in China with multiple entry visas for tourists, which means they have to leave the country after 30 days and can't return for another 30 days," said Elyse Stone, who came to China from the United States in 2009.

"Actually, it's common in the expat community. Some companies that are without credentials to employ foreigners give them round-trip tickets to Hong Kong to avoid overstaying the duration of their tourist visas," said Stone, a marketing executive for SinoUnited Health, a physical therapy clinic in Shanghai.

In 2011, the country saw 20,000 cases of foreigners who had illegally entered, stayed or worked in China, according to the Ministry of Public Security. Most of the illegal employment were at language schools.

Shi Jing and Wang Xinwei in Shanghai contributed to this story.



## CHILLING IN THE POOL

PHOTO BY YANG BO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

A monkey cools off in a zoo pool in Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu province, on Wednesday. Scorching heat has hit the city over the past days.

## CHINADAILY

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