

INTRODUCTION TO YOUR WORK PLACEMENT: THE NUTS AND BOLTS

ERMES

ENHANCING
RESOURCES FOR
MOBILITY
EXPERIENCES AND
STRATEGIES

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THE IMPORTANCE OF A WORK PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE.

Work placement abroad could be very important for giving an international dimension to your career and for discovering different ways of life.

Don't be lazy or afraid to evaluate all the pros and cons from every angle.

This experience will strengthen your professional and cross-competences, as well as waking up your intercultural awareness and updating your knowledge and abilities.

In order to prepare your travel and move to other countries you have to understand the foreign cultural complexity and start a dialogue with other ways of life.

To keep the fear of departure under control you have to get some information on cultural adaptation in general and on specific aspects of the country of destination with basic information such as:

- History /Traditions / Ethnic origins / Religion / Social Customs /Daily routine
- Rules / Administrative structure / Form of government
- Health care / Taxes / Social protection / Insurance
- Educational and political systems / Demographic aspects
- Economical data / Commercial Practices / Cost of living
- Food
- Logistical matters

Consider also that you are going to a country where the language is different from your own mother tongue, therefore you should be able to speak English at a standard level that will enable you to carry out basic conversations with people you will be working with. Obviously, you will get much more out of the experience if you are able to communicate well with people working and living around you and you will be integrated much quicker into your new environment and feel at ease. If you think your language skills are still inadequate, the remedy could be a language course before starting the work placement.

Last but not least you have to be curious, enquire further and consider any other sources of information; don't hesitate to talk with family, friends and, of course, experts who have a first hand experience of what it means to move abroad.

When you're in your new country, your first goal would be to take care about yourself, so you have to get information on health care, taxes, social protection and insurance. This will help you to adapt yourself to your new environment easily. Much of the necessary information that you will need can be found contacting directly your training centre or surfing the Internet.

Here's a simple list of what you have to know:

Addresses and telephone numbers

1. Where you're going to live, residential or home stay.
2. Where you're going to work.

3. Emergency contact
4. Medical and dental care.
5. Cabs
6. Police station

Customs and behaviours

1. Socialization rules
2. Traffic regulation and driving habits.
3. Non verbal languages
4. Drinking and eating routine
5. Expectations (what they think about foreigners)

Personal safety and care of valuables

1. It is better to take out an insurance for yourself and your valuables.
2. You always have to move safely in your accommodation and in your workplace.
(for example, you have to know evacuation and emergency procedures).
3. Most structures avoid responsibility of loss, damage, or theft of personal valuables, so you always have to take care of your personal belongings.
4. It is better to move around the city with friends or colleagues. You have to stay alert but don't have to fear everything.
5. Don't be afraid to run away, or ask for help or call a cab.
6. Don't date with people you don't know well.
7. Remember what you're doing when you're drinking.
8. Go to the police station to register your stay, ask for their emergency services and how to report a crime.

So, try to study the laws, behaviours and licenses of your new country in order to know even your rights and how to make complaints too.

Facilities

By the way, living in another country also means that you have the unique opportunity to melt with interesting cultures and if you want to have an intense and complete experience you also have to look out for addresses, telephone numbers and opening times of :

1. libraries
2. theatres
3. cinemas
4. art galleries
5. cultural centres
6. fitness suites
7. places of interest around the city

... and don't forget that every city has a touristic information board that will tell you about all those facilities and about all the special events during your stay.

So if you know the country's rules and your rights, if you know how to communicate precisely without intercultural misunderstanding and if you play by the book, everything will be all right and your stay will be more enjoyable.