

Amity Institute

Handbook for
Host Families



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Program Goals	
Key Terms	
Who are Amity Interns?	
Why are Interns Here?	
What to Expect of Your Intern	
What <u>Not</u> to Expect of Your Intern	
Roles and Responsibilities of a Host Family	6
The School Assignment	7
Intern Teaching	
Personal Study Classes	
Community Involvement	
Amity Institute Policies	11
Health Insurance	
Stipend	
Employment	
Meals	
Debts	
Absences from School	
Housing	
Dating Students	
Inappropriate Materials	
Alcohol and Drugs	
Smoking	
Driving	
International Travel During Assignment	
Program Extensions	
Probation	
Dismissal	
Ending an Assignment Early	
Strategies for Success	16
Problem Solving	
Dealing with Culture Shock	

The content of this handbook is property of Amity Institute. Any duplication needs prior written approval of the organization.

© 2009

Introduction

Welcome to the Amity Intern Teacher Program! We are delighted that you have chosen to participate and are willing to open your home to an Intern.

This **Host Family Handbook** will provide you with guidelines and policies. You must read it cover to cover and use it as a reference guide. This handbook should answer most of your questions and anticipate your concerns; however, it is impossible to predict every situation. We urge you to contact your Program Counselor to discuss any further issues. We hope you will enjoy and benefit from this cross-cultural experience.

The **Amity Intern Teacher Bulletin** provides a general overview of the Intern Teacher Program including Intern Teacher guidelines, Host School responsibilities and the invitation process. If you would like to receive a copy of the Intern Teacher Bulletin, please contact your Program Counselor.

Remember that we are here to assist you throughout your Intern's assignment. Your Program Counselor is available via telephone or email to provide support and advice.

Program Goals

Founded in 1962, the Amity Intern Teacher Program is based on the belief that language learning and cultural exchange are essential to building international friendship and cultural understanding. This philosophy still remains at the core of the program today.

Interns are here to bring their languages and cultures to life, to engage and motivate US students and to leave them with new confidence in their ability to communicate across borders. Interns inform and inspire, helping students better understand other parts of the world. Our Interns will shape your community's perspective on their country, its culture and people.

Interns also learn about US culture and gain a deeper understanding of their own. Our final goal is that Interns return home and share what they have learned and experienced with their own communities.

Key Terms

Assignment

Intern's position in the school and community

Program Counselor

Main contact at Amity Institute, available for advice and information

Host School

School where the Intern will work

School Coordinator

Main contact for Amity Institute, the Intern and the Host Family who oversees arrangements for Intern's assignment.

Supervising Teacher

Intern's educational mentor and direct supervisor

Host Family

The family, provided by Host School, that the Intern will live with during the assignment

Stipend

The money that the Intern will receive monthly from the school

J-1 Visa

A temporary cultural exchange visa. All Interns should return to home country upon completion of assignment to share what they have learned.

DS-2019

J-1 visa sponsorship document issued by Amity

Who are Amity Interns?

Interns are single and between the ages of 20 and 30. They are students or graduates of institutions of higher education in their home countries. Some of them have teaching experience or have worked with children or students. The personal qualities we seek in Interns are friendliness, openness, maturity, adaptability, motivation and enthusiasm.

Why are Interns here?

Interns are here to represent their language, culture and country, to share experience, to contribute knowledge and ideas, to learn first-hand about American culture and life in the US, and to improve their English. Interns are considered teaching assistants and/or temporary faculty members of the Host School. Interns are volunteers who are role models, ambassadors of good will, active community participants, and integrated members of their Host Family or school living environment.

What to expect from your Intern

Amity Interns will participate in a cross-cultural exchange that will be a challenging and educational experience for all involved. Both the Intern and members of the Host Family must work to understand and communicate effectively with each other. Always remember that Interns have placed themselves in a foreign environment for the purpose of educating others and expanding their own knowledge of education and culture. Both the Host Family and the Intern will have initial expectations of what the experience will be like.

In general, Interns are expected to:

- Live a new way of life
- Be flexible in adapting to new circumstances
- Organize their own social lives
- Get involved in their local communities
- Be self-reliant and take care of their own personal needs
- Deal with any problems constructively
- Help as much as possible

At the Host School, Interns are expected to:

- Work under the guidance of their Supervising Teachers
- Accept all assigned duties with a positive attitude
- Take responsibility for assigned work
- Show initiative in planning lessons

- Assist with activities outside the classroom
- Attend Personal Study Classes
- Dress and behave in a professional manner
- Build relationships with school staff
- Adjust to teaching methods/educational philosophies
- Address inaccuracies/stereotypes about their culture diplomatically
- Receive a monthly stipend

With their Host Family, Interns should be willing to:

- Become a part of the family
- Help with household chores
- Do their own laundry
- Follow house rules
- Adjust to the Host Family's schedule
- Participate in family activities if invited
- Prepare a meal from their home country on occasion
- Keep the Host Family informed of their plans and daily schedules
- Live with more than one family
- Take the initiative to spend time with the family
- Share their culture
- Build a relationship with the Host Brother/Sister

What not to expect of your Intern

It is important to understand that Interns are engaging in a learning experience and it will take time for them to absorb all of the new information about their Host Family, school and community.

In general, Interns are not expected to:

- Live and work as they did in their home countries
- Enter into a university degree program
- Depend on extra money earned outside of school
- Have their social lives organized by the Host School and Host Family

At the Host School, Interns are not expected to:

- Be in charge of classes, unless agreed upon prior to arrival
- Work as equals with the teacher
- Be treated as a guest
- Receive special treatment
- Set their own schedule

With their Host Family, Interns are not expected to:

- Live like a hotel guest
- Rely on the Host Family for all transportation
- Drive the Host Family's car
- Be taken to restaurants at the Host Family's expense
- Be provided with entertainment
- Come and go as they please
- Live with their Supervising Teachers

Roles and Responsibilities of a Host Family

During your Intern's assignment, we are here to assist you. Please contact your Program Counselor if you have any questions or concerns. Unless we are notified, we will not be able to help you.

The Host Family is the Intern's substitute family and an essential part of his/her assignment. Your presence, particularly in the early weeks, will help the Intern feel at home and soothe any feelings of anxiety, insecurity or homesickness. Most Interns look forward to a genuine family living experience: to being included in family life and feeling that you take interest in them.

Your Intern will feel increasingly at ease in your family and this will lead to greater independence and new relationships outside your family. It is very important for both your family and the Intern to talk about each of your expectations in the beginning of his/her stay. The goal is to create a balanced experience for you and the Intern regarding family time, social interaction and privacy.

The School Coordinator must visit each prospective home to discuss arrangements, clarify expectations and confirm living conditions.

Here are the Host Family requirements:

- Free room and board for the Intern should be arranged with an American Host Family/individual in the community or on-campus housing
- Interns must have a private room
- The Host Family provides all meals except lunch on school days, which the school covers
- Interns may not live with their Supervising Teacher and, ideally, should not live with their School Coordinator
- Interns can live with multiple families, but each family must host for one quarter (minimum nine weeks)

To invite an Intern into your home, here are some important steps:

- Have a meeting with the School Coordinator to go over the requirements and rules of the Amity Intern Teacher Program
- Email or mail a letter to your Intern introducing your family before he/she arrives in the US – he/she would be delighted to hear from you!
- Finalize your Intern's pick-up at the airport with the Host School; your Intern must know who will pick him/her up before arriving in the US
- Prepare a private room for an Intern to live

Interns are responsible for managing their money throughout their entire stay. Generally speaking, Interns can be expected to pay for themselves if they go out with your family. Please be clear about individual occasions to avoid misunderstandings. Make sure that the Intern has understood that he/she is invited in the true sense of the meaning or that he/she may join the family at personal cost. Do not assume anything in the beginning. It is not rude to explain the plan before an event, therefore giving the Intern the option to decline the invitation to join if he/she cannot afford it. This is most important if planning a trip to which you invite the Intern. *Will you cover the cost or is the Intern responsible?* Please take into consideration that most Interns live on a very small budget and may be embarrassed to admit it.

Interns are required to bring at least US\$150 per month for their personal expenses. Depending on the location of the assignment, Amity Institute encourages Interns to enter the US with access to between US\$150 and US\$250 per month. In addition to the money from

home, Interns will receive a monthly stipend from the school which should take care of most basic personal needs.

You may be asked to help with a few local rides per week if the public transportation is not available. (The Host School is responsible for arranging transportation to and from school.)

Interns are not live-in babysitters and should not be expected to perform the duties appropriate to an au pair, such as childcare, house sitting or housework beyond that of other family members. Do not use him/her as an unpaid language coach by constantly speaking in the Intern's native language. This may be excellent practice for you, but defeats the purpose of improving his/her English skills.

Your Intern may not be interested in attending religious services with you. Yet we hope that, in most cases, Interns will be willing to attend occasional church services or church-sponsored social events. Interns are selected to participate in the program without regard to religious affiliation and mutual respect for different religious practices is expected.

The Intern Teacher Program's final goal is that our Interns return home and share what they have learned and experienced throughout their Amity assignment. It is very important that both the Host School and the Host Family encourage their Interns to go back to their home countries at the end of their assignments. Please do not assist Interns in attempting to stay in the US past the end date of their assignment. They know before they come that it is a temporary stay with the goal to share at home what they have learned in the US.

Please keep in touch with your Amity Program Counselor and the Host School during your Intern's stay. Because of the Intern's different cultural background, you might need some assistance hosting him/her. Maintaining consistent communication is essential to productively addressing issues that may arise.

The School Assignment

Your Intern's assignment has three key components: Intern teaching, personal study classes and community involvement.

Intern Teaching

Intern teaching is your Intern's first priority. This is the reason he/she came to the US. The Supervising Teacher is required to set up the Intern's teaching schedule before arranging his/her personal study classes or extracurricular activities. Teaching will be one of the most challenging parts of your Intern's assignment; however, it provides an excellent opportunity to build new skills in education, language and intercultural communication.

Your Intern's Relationship with the Supervising Teacher

The Supervising Teacher is the Intern's educational mentor. Developing a strong, supportive relationship with the Supervising Teacher is crucial to the Intern's successful classroom experience. Adjusting to the Supervising Teacher's educational approach and methods is part of the cultural immersion that the Intern was looking for when he/she joined the program. This is a great opportunity for the Intern to learn about different teaching styles.

Tips for the Supervising Teacher working with Interns:

- Clearly define what will be expected of the Intern within the classroom
- Provide all texts and supplemental materials for the Intern to review
- Discuss approach to teaching, classroom management, methodologies and curriculum
- Answer any questions about US and local culture

- Diplomatically address any personal and professional issues with the Intern
- Allow the Intern to share interesting facts about his/her country and culture with students

Interns are given the following tips for successful communication:

- Be supportive of the Supervising Teacher in the classroom
- Meet weekly to discuss suggestions for class activities
- Do not expect to assume full authority as a teacher, unless previously agreed upon
- **Never** correct a teacher in front of students or colleagues
- Adapt to the Supervising Teacher's approach and methods
- Express classroom observations with tact and sensitivity
- Remain open-minded

Your Intern's Relationship with the School Coordinator

The School Coordinator is responsible for the overall organization of the Intern's assignment – finding the Host Family, organizing Personal Study options, helping the Intern make connections in the community and coordinating other arrangements for him/her at the school.

Interns may have a distant or close connection with the School Coordinator. In many smaller schools, the Supervising Teacher also takes on the role of School Coordinator. Alternatively, the School Coordinator may be the school principal, a member of the parent committee or a school district administrator.

In most assignments, the School Coordinator should be the first person Interns go to with questions or concerns. If the School Coordinator is unavailable, Interns should speak to their Supervising Teacher. If the Supervising Teacher functions as the School Coordinator, Interns may report their concerns to their Program Counselor. Please refrain from getting involved in issues relating to the school. The Intern may want to discuss challenges or vent frustrations with members of the Host Family, but the Intern is an adult and should work out school issues directly or with the help of his/her Program Counselor.

Your Intern's Relationship with the Students

During the assignment, the Intern should think of himself/herself as a temporary faculty member. At the beginning of the assignment, the Supervising Teacher or School Coordinator needs to explain to the Intern what the rules and expectations are regarding his/her relationship with students. Some schools like Interns to mix often with students to practice language and promote cultural exchange, others expect a more formal relationship.

Interns are given the following tips for successful student relations:

- Model behavior after other faculty members in the school
- Follow the Supervising Teacher's advice on student relations
- Ask the Supervising Teacher questions about student behavior that is unfamiliar to you

In the Classroom

The Intern's role in the classroom is a flexible one, depending on the needs of the school, but in all cases must center on **sharing language and culture**.

Common teaching duties may include:

- Assisting the teacher in the classroom/co-teaching
- Providing conversation practice with groups/individuals
- Giving cultural presentations
- Modeling pronunciation
- Participating in extracurricular activities related to language/culture
- Developing materials for language practice
- Administrative work (up to four hours per week)

The Supervising Teacher is in charge of the classroom and is ultimately responsible for classroom management. The Intern may find that discipline is handled differently in the US and that "classroom management" is a challenge.

Sexual Harassment

US laws protect individuals from being sexually harassed. It is important for the Intern to understand what constitutes sexual harassment, a sensitive issue that could result in disciplinary action, dismissal or even legal action. Interns must be aware of differing cultural standards of communication, physical touching and eye contact and try to observe US norms. Interns need to be clear that what may be acceptable behavior in their home countries could be considered offensive in the US.

What is it?

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other oral, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of sexual harassment:

- Creating an offensive environment by repeated written, verbal, physical, and/or visual contacts with sexual overtones. These may include: suggestive or obscene letters, derogatory comments or jokes, unwelcome touching, impeding movement, assault, staring, gestures, or displaying offensive objects.
- Engaging in a pattern of conduct that causes discomfort and/or humiliation, like: unnecessary touching, comments about a person's body, sexuality, or appearance, rumors of current or past sexual activity, continued expressions of interest after being informed that the interest is not welcome.
- Making reprisals or threats of reprisals following the rejection of harassing behavior.
- Retaliating against a person for reporting or threatening to report sexual harassment.
- Engaging in coercive sexual behavior within the work environment for the purposes of control or influence.

Victims of sexual harassment

Victims and harassers can be men or women. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex. The harasser can be a supervisor, colleague, subordinate, host, or guest. The victim does not have to be the person harassed, but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.

Personal Study Classes

The second key component of your Intern's assignment is the personal study program which is designed to expand the educational experience in the US and to create connections with other members of the community. These classes should also provide the Intern with additional insight into American culture and give him/her a forum to share his/her viewpoint with others. Interns are required to complete one or two classes depending on the length of the assignment. The Personal Study Classes are a mandatory program component.

Community Involvement

The third key component of the Intern Teacher Program is an active involvement in the host community. Living with a Host Family is one element of this community involvement, but it should not stop there. The Intern must be generous with his/her time and energy and try to participate in as many activities as possible. Please help the Intern get involved in the local community.

We encourage our Interns to:

Get involved with local nonprofits and charities. Volunteer opportunities may include getting involved with a local youth group, helping build low-cost housing, translating for a refugee who speaks their language, or assisting at a homeless shelter.

Share their experiences. Interns may be invited to speak to community organizations (such as a Rotary club) or be asked to do an interview with the local/school media. Please send your Program Counselor copies of any such publicity.

Start their own activity groups. Interns may start interest groups such as a foreign film society, folk dancing group, music classes, or other activities related to special interests.

Participate in faith-based activity. If the Host Family or Supervising Teacher occasionally asks Interns to attend a church, synagogue or mosque, they are encouraged to accept these invitations as an opportunity for increasing cultural awareness and interconnection.

Partner with local international centers. Many communities have international centers or visitor groups, which may run events such as a film series, a speaker series or an international dinner. Find out about opportunities for getting involved and see if your Intern's international background can contribute to the center's resources.

Amity Institute Policies

Health Insurance

Interns must have valid health insurance at all times during their assignment – this is a State Department requirement for granting the visa. **Failure to have health insurance will invalidate the visa sponsorship and will result in dismissal from the program.**

Amity Institute's Insurance

Amity Institute has arranged an insurance policy through a reputable company. This policy includes all necessary coverage outlined in the Health Insurance Memo of Understanding that Interns received with their assignment materials. **Dental treatments are not covered** except as a result of injury or accident. Interns may choose Amity Institute's policy or comparable insurance from their home countries. **However, we strongly urge Interns to purchase Amity Institute's policy or another American insurance policy.**

Interns' insurance policies must be valid from the date Interns fly to the US until their exact departure dates. **Interns will be required to buy insurance for the entire length of their assignments before arrival in the US.**

To purchase Amity Institute's insurance, Interns are required to follow the instructions they received in the pre-departure packet.

Personal policies

If Interns choose to use insurance from their countries or another US policy, the policy must meet the State Department's **MINIMUM** requirements outlined below:

- A deductible amount not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness
- Medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness
- Medical evacuation coverage of \$10,000
- Repatriation of remains coverage of \$7,500

In addition, the State Department requires that the insurance corporation underwriting the policy has one of the following ratings:

- A.M. Best rating of 'A-' or above
- Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of 'A-1' or above
- Standard & Poor's Claims-paying ability rating of 'A-' or above
- Weiss Research, Inc. rating of 'B+' or above

If Interns purchase a policy that fails to meet these requirements, Amity Institute will not accept it as valid insurance, and they will be required to buy a new policy.

When buying their own policies, Interns are required to:

- Ensure that the policy and company meet the visa requirements listed above
- Buy a policy valid **for the entire length of their stay**, including the day they fly to the US and the day they depart
- Send a copy of the policy to their Program Counselor for verification before coming to the US

Stipend

Interns are paid a monthly stipend for the entire assignment period, including school holidays. The stipend may be prorated according to beginning and ending assignment dates.

Employment

The **only** employment permitted outside of the assignment must involve the **sharing of language and culture**. Interns may not accept any employment without prior **written authorization** from their Supervising Teacher and Amity Institute. A maximum of **ten** additional hours of employment per week are permitted. These additional hours must be compensated at the standard rate. Teaching and tutoring are usually approved.

Additional employment may not interfere with or take time away from commitments at school.

Meals

Interns living with Host Families are provided with daily meals, except when Interns are at school. On school days, Interns are provided with a school lunch. If there is no school lunch program available, a daily allowance for food expenses will be given directly to the Intern by the school.

At universities and colleges, Interns may be provided with meal cards or a meal plan.

Debts

Interns will be held responsible for any financial debts incurred. If Interns do not pay their debts, they can expect to have their visa cancelled and to be dismissed from the program. In severe cases, Interns may also be reported to the appropriate government agencies, which could prevent future entry into the US.

In order to participate in the Amity Intern Teacher Program, Interns must show proof of at least **US\$150 per month** to cover personal expenses during their stay. They will be asked to send the Confirmation of Funds to their Program Counselor, along with a copy of their most recent bank statements. A copy of the Confirmation of Funds is also required by the US Embassy/Consulate. Most Interns will live on a small budget. Host Families are not financially responsible for Interns, and should not feel pressure to assist with additional expenses. It is much better to show ways of finding low cost sources (i.e. second-hand stores for winter clothing, discounted entertainment) and to focus on the value of the experience.

Absences from School

Interns may not plan absences from school other than vacation time that is part of the normal school calendar. Missing school for any reason other than illness must be pre-approved by the School Coordinator, and the Intern may be asked to make-up the time. Interns must report any absences due to illness to the Supervising Teacher or School Coordinator before the school day begins.

Housing

According to State Department regulations, Amity Institute has to keep current contact and address information for all participants and has only a small window of time to enter changes of housing arrangements into SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information Service). Amity Institute has to know at all times the current home address of an Intern. Failure to provide updates to us within five days will have serious consequences to the point of losing the visa eligibility.

It is normal for Interns to live with more than one family during an assignment, but the Host School should not arrange for more than one family in any nine-week period. However, under exceptional circumstances this may be necessary.

Interns may not live with their Supervising Teachers and, ideally, should not live with their School Coordinators.

Dating Students

Interns are strictly prohibited from dating high school students from any school OR anyone under the age of 18. It is likely that Interns will develop friendships with students and may socialize with them outside of school. Participating in social activities with students and their families is encouraged as long as relations are **friendly and professional**. It is important to acknowledge that different cultures have different standards about social activities. If you feel that your Intern does not act according to American customary behavior it will be greatly appreciated if you take the time and explain in a friendly way what you and your community could see as overstepping boundaries. It is more constructive to proactively address these issues than to allow behaviors or situations to escalate.

It is inappropriate to engage in a romantic relationship between Host and Intern. Consequences include removal from the home and possible termination from the program.

Inappropriate Materials

As an Amity Intern J-1 visa holder and a guest of Amity, the host school and host family, Interns cannot use any of the technology (i.e. computer, phone, DVD player, IPOD, stereo, television, cell phone, personal digital assistants (PDA) phones) that may be available to them to access inappropriate, offensive or sexually explicit materials. This includes technology at school, host home, any other personal residences in local community, local businesses, school district offices and any other public organization (library, college, universities, learning centers, etc.)

Interns will be held legally and financially responsible for any wrong doing or incurred cost associated with breaking this agreement while participating in the Amity program.

Violation of this agreement is reason for cancellation of the Intern's visa sponsorship and program participation, and cause for Intern's immediate return to home country.

Alcohol and Drugs

Interns are responsible for obeying all federal and state laws concerning drugs and alcohol. Interns who are of legal age may choose to have alcoholic beverages at appropriate times. Interns must **never** buy or give alcohol to anyone under the age of 21, or drink alcohol with them. Using illegal drugs is prohibited. **Violation of these policies will result in immediate dismissal from the program and could result in arrest.**

Smoking

Interns must obey school smoking regulations. Interns must also be considerate of Host Family preferences regarding smoking in the house. Some cities and states have passed laws prohibiting smoking in public areas, please help Interns to be aware of local laws.

Driving

Interns are permitted to drive only if they hold a valid driver's license. Interns **may not** drive their Host Family's car, unless a prior **written agreement** has been signed between the parties, addressing insurance issues and potential damages.

Interns who choose to drive a vehicle in the US are solely responsible for their own actions. Amity will not pay for any damages.

Interns should obtain an international driver's license in their home country. Most likely they need to acquire a US state driver's license and to purchase automobile insurance if they plan to rent or buy a car. Interns must only drive vehicles that are properly insured. Each US state has different laws. Information can be found on the Internet or by calling the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in the state government section of the phone book.

International Travel during Assignment

Interns will need Amity Institute's signature on their DS-2019 if they intend to travel home or to another country (including Mexico, Canada and parts of the Caribbean) during the assignment. This signature indicates that the Intern is in good standing with the program and ensures re-entry into the US.

Interns must mail their original DS-2019 forms to Amity Institute for signature **at least three weeks** before departure to assure that Amity Institute has sufficient time to return the signed document. Interns planning on entering countries other than their home country must contact that particular country's Embassy/Consulate to find out about visa requirements. The J-1 visa does not give permission to enter any country other than the US.

Program Extensions

The Amity Intern Teacher Assignment cannot be extended beyond one calendar year. It is expected that all participants return home at the end of the agreed upon term.

Social Security Number

Interns may need assistance from Host School or Host Family in obtaining their social security number. Immediately upon arrival in the US, Interns are instructed to apply for the social security number at a local social security office. The School Coordinator, Supervising Teacher or member of the Host Family may need to assist the Intern in filling out the social security forms and transporting the Intern to and from the social security office. The Social Security Administration website is an extremely useful tool in accessing documents and information, www.ssa.gov.

Probation

If a Host School has concerns about an Intern's performance or behavior, Amity Institute asks the School Coordinator to follow these procedures:

- Address the issues promptly with the Intern
- If problems persist, provide Amity Institute with a written statement explaining the problems
- If a mutual agreement cannot be reached, the Program Counselor will be called upon to address the problems in a conference call

The conference call will determine if the probationary period is necessary. Amity Institute, as the legal visa sponsor, not the Host School, holds the final authority to initiate the probationary period.

The Intern will be notified of the probation with a written warning from Amity Institute. This detailed letter gives the Intern one last chance to evaluate his/her behavior and make necessary improvements/adjustments. The probation letter will include the changes expected of the Intern.

After one week, the Program Counselor and the School Coordinator will review the Intern's progress. A final conference call may be necessary to assess the results of the probation.

Unprofessional behavior during probation is cause for **immediate dismissal**.

Behaviors that may lead to probation include:

- Unsatisfactory performance or attendance
- Unprofessional conduct
- Continuing negative attitude
- Failure to meet all contractual requirements

Dismissal

If substantial improvement has not been made by the end of the probationary period, Amity Institute, with the help of the Host School, will dismiss the Intern from the program.

Immediate dismissal without probation will occur in the case of:

- Failure to follow US laws or State Department guidelines
- Failure to follow Amity Institute policies

Dismissal will result in visa cancellation and the Intern's immediate departure from the US. The Certificate of Studies will not be issued.

Amity Institute, as the legal sponsor, **not** the Host School, holds the final authority to dismiss the Intern from the program.

Ending an Assignment Early

Occasionally, an Intern needs to leave the program early due to a health or family emergency. In such cases, Amity Institute can release an Intern from the assignment.

All other early departures will be considered a violation of the Intern Teacher Contract apply. The Certificate of Studies will not be issued.

In both cases, the visa will be cancelled.

Strategies for Success

Communicate, communicate, communicate

Clear, positive communication is the key to success. Make sure that your Intern and your family maintain open, direct lines of communication to avoid any potential problems.

Communicate what is expected of the Intern

Many misunderstandings can be avoided if the Intern has a clear idea of your house rules and the expectations you have of him/her. Do not simply assume that your Intern understands what you mean. Smiling and nodding may be a polite way to show attention but does not guarantee that the message has come through. Use the suggested list of housing questions as a guide and add anything specific to your home. Most Interns understand and remember written communication much better than verbal conversations in the beginning of their stay.

Keep an open mind

Foreign visitors sometimes have an incomplete picture of American culture based on Hollywood films, television, and the few American tourists they have met abroad. Values and lifestyles vary widely across the country. Be open-minded and help the Intern build an understanding of your community from his/her own impressions and experiences.

Be diplomatic and appreciative

Do not express excessive criticism of the Intern's country or any other countries. Please be sensitive and show concern for the Intern's point of view. We expect the same from him/her.

Remember Interns are international volunteers

Interns have made a choice to live and work in a different country as informal cultural ambassadors. Though they do not receive a full salary, they have committed their time and energy to working with US students and educators in an effort to increase international friendship and cultural understanding. Please remember that the Intern has invested a significant amount of time and personal resources to participate in the Amity Intern Teacher Program.

Problem Solving

Please do not let misunderstandings grow into problems by ignoring them. Instead, communicate early on with those involved and find a solution. Your Program Counselor is always available for advice and support.

Tips for success:

- Deal with the problem immediately so that it remains manageable
- Open lines of communication by offering to talk about the problem
- Always communicate with the people who seem to be the source of the problem, or who seem to have the most direct relationship to the problem
- Be a good listener – try to understand why the problem exists and consider the Intern's perspective
- Acknowledge your part in the problem
- Be open to receiving suggestions
- Offer to do your best to improve the situation

Dealing with Culture Shock

The Intern has taken a big risk by agreeing to fulfill this assignment. As much as he/she may have looked forward to coming to the US, it usually does not take very long until the first excitement makes room for an experience called culture shock.

What is it?

Culture shock is the emotional sensation of being a stranger. It is the normal disorientation or discomfort that comes from living in unfamiliar surroundings and learning to function in a different culture. The absence of family and friends, and differences in lifestyle, values, beliefs and relationships will suddenly make people feel like an outsider, perhaps producing the effect of "shock". When they begin to identify and deal with the deeper differences between their home and US culture, this feeling can be particularly strong.

When does it usually happen?

It can begin soon after their arrival and has four stages.

Stage I is usually considered the "honeymoon" stage when the novelty of living in a new country is the source of great excitement.

Stage II appears several weeks later as the excitement wears off. Differences between their home countries and the host culture become more apparent, and they become more aware of their values and those of the host culture. They may feel homesick and begin to miss friends, family, their countries and their life back home.

Stage III is characterized by challenging and rejecting the values of the host culture and an increased bonding with their own. They may feel a need to be in contact with people from their own culture and find it difficult to speak English every day.

Stage IV is reached when a balance between their culture and the host culture is achieved. This stage is characterized by becoming closer to their Host Families and co-workers, a deeper understanding of the culture, and noticeable improvements in their English.

Does it ever end?

Yes, because culture shock is an early stage in the gradual learning process called cultural adaptation. This learning process involves getting used to new ways of thinking and doing things, and absorbing new ideas and customs. A situation where there is so much to learn often triggers behaviors or reactions that are typically identified as symptoms of culture shock.

Typical symptoms:

- Homesickness
- Reclusiveness
- Irritability
- Mild depression
- Fatigue
- Extreme eating habits (too much - too little)
- Irregular or excessive sleep patterns
- Extensive criticism of the US or constant comparisons

If your Intern shows some symptoms of culture shock, please remind him/her that this is normal for everyone living in another culture. The best remedy for culture shock is to keep busy, meet people, make friends, and get involved in school and local activities. What he/she will need most is a sense of belonging and deeper understanding of the culture. Participating in some activity or joining a group will give him/her this sense. In extremely rare cases, the Intern cannot overcome homesickness and adjust in a reasonable time. The only solution is then to return home to familiar surroundings.

If your Intern appears to be experiencing depression or has significant personal issues either in the US or occurring in the home country, it is critical that you communicate with someone about the situation, either the School Coordinator or someone at Amity. Hosting an Intern should be a positive experience for all involved. If there is something that is causing the Intern to be depressed or withdrawn from school, family and friends, please do not hesitate to speak to someone about it so that we can help.

As mentioned before: Your Program Counselor is always available to assist you. Please feel free to contact us early when you need to discuss your Intern's culture shock. We have experience helping our Interns go through culture shock and eventually most Interns learn to enjoy the assignment.

Amity Institute reserves the right to change policies without prior notice. Please refer to our most recent Intern Teacher Bulletin for updated information.

Amity Institute
3065 Rosecrans Place, Suite 104
San Diego, CA 92110
Telephone: 619-222-7000 FAX: 619-222-7016
www.amity.org

Notes

Notes