

Hospitality Training/Internship Program Guidelines



Training in the Hospitality/Tourism Industry

For an international Intern/Trainee with an educational or professional background in hospitality or culinary, an internship with an American hotel will provide a valuable international experience and new skills. This document outlines AHA's specific guidelines and requirements for hospitality training programs

AHA requires that hospitality organizations have broad operations to facilitate a comprehensive training in the hospitality field including rotation through different roles and/or different departments. We typically find that hotels with at least a three-star/three-diamond rating as determined by AAA and/or Mobil Travel meet these requirements, although not in every case. In addition, to qualify as a host, the property must provide extended amenities like concierge services, banquets/events, restaurant services etc.

To participate in the J-1 Intern or Trainee program, your organization must be able to provide a structured, work-based training experience while abiding by some key program regulations. When deciding to host a J-1 participant, ask yourself the following:

- Do you have the resources in place to provide a structured, guided work-based training program to the intern/trainee within a professional environment?
- Do you have the ability to provide ongoing supervision and evaluation of the intern/trainee?
- What kind of training can you offer and what kind of training is the participant looking for? These should overlap.
- Is what you are offering bona fide training and not regular work?
- Can you schedule your participant to train at least 32 hours a week?
- In programs 6 months or greater, can you provide at least three comprehensive departmental and/or functional rotations.
- Can you provide housing and transportation assistance and or support?
- Are you willing and able to provide cultural activities and teach an international participant about U.S. culture?

Important Regulations:

- ✓ The Exchange Visitor Program regulations establish the primary objectives of the training and internship programs at 22 CFR 62.22(b)(1)(i): to enhance the skills and expertise of exchange visitors in their academic or occupational fields through structured and guided work-based training and internship programs and to improve participants' knowledge of American techniques, methodologies, and technology. Such programs are also intended to increase participants' understanding of American culture and society, and to enhance Americans' knowledge of foreign cultures and skills through an open interchange of ideas between participants and their U.S. associates. **The training and internship programs, therefore, must only be used for bona fide training or work-based learning, not to have exchange visitors perform ordinary work.**
- ✓ Hospitality Programs of more than 6 months require at least three different departmental or functional rotations and or phases. Training plans should be progressive with advance training aspects focusing on leadership and business management skills and traits.
- ✓ Minimum of 32 hours per week is required.
- ✓ Host provided or assistance with housing and transportation.
- ✓ Host must provide continuous onsite supervision and mentoring by experienced and knowledgeable staff and conduct required midpoint and final evaluations.
- ✓ Will notify AHA promptly of any concerns about, changes in, or deviations from Training/Internship Placement Plan during training programs. If the host begins to see performance concerns which may result in the termination of the participant Host Company should contact AHA immediately
- ✓ Arrange "Cultural Activities and events" for participants.

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Interns/Trainees must participate in comprehensive rotations through a variety of departments. Training plans must show growth and development of skills and show that they are not only learning the task but understanding how it fits into the overall successful operation of the property. Interns/Trainees are encouraged to learn about budgeting, marketing, management, and scheduling by shadowing and observing supervisors to gain a broader understanding of the property and industry.

The training and internship programs must only be used for *bona fide training or work-based learning*, not to have exchange visitors perform ordinary work.

Therefore, as reviewing the following rotation guidelines NOTE: The objective the program includes engaging participants fully in approved rotations to ensure professional and personal growth while developing new skills and knowledge. The goal of work-based training is for participants to display they are not only learning the task but understanding how it fits into the overall successful operation and management. Furthermore, the program is also intended to increase participants' understanding of American culture and society, and to enhance Americans' knowledge of foreign cultures and skills through an open interchange of ideas between participants and their U.S. associates.

Acceptable Rotations:

- ✓ Front Desk/Concierge/Reservations
- ✓ F&B Service Positions (restaurant, catering/banquets, hotel outlets) – focus is customer service skill, US service standards, teamwork, communication, financial goals, sales/marketing, leadership
- ✓ Beverage Service - focus must include cost control, service standards, sales and marketing, inventory, beverage management.
- ✓ F&B Host - focus includes restaurant "floor" management, teamwork, leadership, communication, customer service
- ✓ Professional Culinary Training Positions – must be rotated through different levels.
- ✓ Activities and Event Planning: focus must be on event planning, scheduling and marketing, cost control and learning the position to understand its management and overall role in the operation

- ✓ Purchasing/Accounting/HR/Sales/Executive Office
- ✓ Advanced Training/Supervisor Skills - Interns/Trainees are encouraged to learn about budgeting, marketing, management, and scheduling by shadowing and observing supervisors.

Rotations Sometimes Acceptable

- ✓ Housekeeping - *only as part of a rotational training plan. Cannot exceed 3 days of job shadow and must focus on learning the position to understand standards, management and leadership.*
- ✓ Night Audit – *training must be limited in duration cannot exceed 20% the training plan (60 days of a 12-month program) and must be 100% supervised. Participants cannot be training/working alone.*
- ✓ PBX – no more than 20% of the training plan
- ✓ Server in Training – *for participants with no or very limited experience, focus on overall introduction to operation and service standards, maximum duration 15 days' best practice, 30 days when additional training is necessary (benefitting participant's development) Training occurs during orientation or intro to new phase/rotation.*
- ✓ Prep Cook - for participants with no or very limited experience, focus on overall introduction to operation and service standards, maximum duration 30 days' best practice, 60 days when additional training is necessary. Occurs during orientation or intro to new phase/rotation
- ✓ Retail: *focus must be on service standards, marketing, purchasing, inventory and learning the position to understand its management and overall role in the operation. No more than 20% of the training plan.*

Never Acceptable as Rotation, includes but not limited:

- ✓ Cleaners Hotel/Resort, Laundry
- ✓ Dishwashing aka Kitchen Worker
- ✓ Short Order Cook/Fast Food Prep
- ✓ Fast Food Service/Cashier/General Clerk/Counter Help/Coffee Barista
- ✓ Banquet Set Up
- ✓ Food Busser
- ✓ Valet
- ✓ Spa
- ✓ Maintenance
- ✓ Security

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Suggested Key Words for International Exchange

The following are suggestions of appropriate words to use when referring to international exchange programs. The overarching goal is for people to understand that exchange programs are primarily for cultural and educational purposes even when they have a “work” component. Whatever words you choose, consistency in messaging is key.

Words to Use

International
Participants
Cultural Ambassadors
International
Exchange
Host organization
Training Program
Internship Program
University coursework
Educational component
Cultural component
Public diplomacy
Skilled
Rotations
Supervised
Growth and Development
Structured
Improve participants’ knowledge of American techniques

Words to Lose

Workers/Work
Unskilled
Employment, ordinary
Labor
Cheap/affordable
Unsupervised
Unstructured
H2b or other labor visa
Employees
Housekeeping
Dishwasher

Use Sparingly
J1 visa (instead refer to program)

Remember – a qualified training does not teach serving, front desk, cooking – this could potentially be considered “ordinary” and in some cases unskilled. The focus of each phase is to develop new skills and knowledge. For example, by rotating through these positions and departments, participants learn the position to understand how it is managed. Additionally, participants learn among other key competencies used by hospitality professionals: teamwork, cooperation, problem solving, time management, guest and public relation skills, intro to budget, marketing, HR, supervisor skills/leadership/management skills...

Margaret Thatcher:

*“Watch your thoughts for they become words.
Watch your words for they become actions.
Watch your actions for they become habits.
Watch your habits for they become your character.
And watch your character for it becomes your destiny.
What we think, we become”*