CAFCE International Committee

Student Engagement Sub-Group

Draft Questions for Student Profiles

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First Name: Roman Smolentsev
Institution: Seneca College

Where did you work abroad (city, country): Kyiv, Ukraine

When did you go abroad: May-August 2010

Which work term (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc..): 1st

1. What motivated you to seek out an international work term?

I wanted to compare environment and work conditions abroad to Canada and see if Ukraine was a good place for me to work.

1. How did you fund the travel and other costs associated with this opportunity?

Global Edge scholarship.

1. Can you tell me what steps you took to secure your co-op position? Did you feel it was hard to secure your co-op position and how would you advise other students to make the same effort?

I just sent in my documentation to the company and asked if I could do my coop there. They agreed as long as I had a Ukrainian passport.

1. When conducting your job search did you find that many of the jobs available were in specific sectors? (ie: corporate, non-profit, government, etc.) Where, or how, would you suggest other students focus their search?

I didn’t conduct any research outside of contacting airlines.

1. Tell me about the cost of living in (city or country). How did your expenses compare to your income based on the salary you were earning? Were you able to save any money and where did you find savings or discounts which reduced your expenses?

I did not earn money at my placement but the scholarship was plenty to cover all expenses. To live comfortably in Kyiv it would cost about $900/month

1. How did you find accommodations and what rent can you expect to pay in (city or country)?

To get good accommodation (studio apartment) that is furnished it cost me $600/month. It all depends on what kind of amenities you require. You can live in a dorm room for about $200/month but must share the shower, kitchen and bathroom.

1. What, if any, cultural barriers did you have to overcome and what were some of these challenges?

None as I am ethnically Ukrainian.

1. Did you find it difficult to meet new people? What steps did you take to integrate yourself into your new surroundings and make yourself more comfortable in a new setting?

People were very friendly and willing to help out if I had any problems. They would invite me out with them because they knew I didn’t know anyone else around.

1. Overall, what advice would you give co-op students who are seeking international opportunities?

I would strongly recommend it because it gives a great opportunity to explore a country from an everyday citizen’s point of view instead of a tourist. It is a great learning experience.

1. Is there anything else you want us to know about your experience?

It time in addition to being a great learning experience.