



GERMAN AMERICAN  
**EXCHANGE**



**German – US**  
**INTERNSHIP PROGRAM 2022**  
**Student Information Package**  
(as of June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

[www.german-american-exchange.com](http://www.german-american-exchange.com)

RÜCKEL & COLLEGEN

**BAKER  
DONELSON**

## THE GERMAN AMERICAN EXCHANGE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### I. Overview

German American Exchange e.V. ("GAE") is a German nonprofit organization offering German university students and young professionals the opportunity to participate in international internships with some of the leading private companies in the U.S. The minimum length of an internship is three months. However, longer internships of four to six months are favored, and 12 months internships may be available. GAE internships are scheduled to begin in late July 2022.

Daily interactions with leading international firms in the U.S. offer German students and young professionals the opportunity to gain insight into the U.S. economy, improve their English language skills, and collect unique cross-cultural experiences. GAE seeks to bring Germany's future leading citizens into direct contact with major U.S. businesses to cultivate first-hand understanding between German and U.S. professionals. Such experiences and relationships can provide a valuable foundation for the next generation of ambassadors to the German-American friendship.

Applicants to the program are required to pay an initial application fee of EUR 50. Once applicants are selected by a U.S. host company, applicants are required to pay an additional processing fee of EUR 150. All fees are non-refundable and payable by wire transfer to GAE. Payments should be wired to the following bank account:

German American Exchange e.V.  
Rückel & Collegen  
Kardinal-Faulhaber-Strasse 15  
80333 München  
E-Mail: [info@german-america-exchange.de](mailto:info@german-america-exchange.de)

**Kontoinhaber:** German American Exchange e.V.  
**Bank:** Commerzbank München  
**BIC:** COBADEFFXXX  
**IBAN:** DE41 7004 0041 0471 6445 00

All information contained in this Information Sheet is for informational purposes only. Nothing in this Information Sheet is intended to be, nor should be construed as being, legal or financial advice, or a promise or guarantee that an applicant will receive an internship offer. Applicants should consult with their independent legal and financial advisors regarding any questions they may have regarding the terms of this internship.

The renowned German law firm of Rückel & Collegen (Munich, Germany) works closely with GAE to assist with German applicants seeking internships in the U.S. Similarly, the renowned U.S. law firm of Baker Donelson in Atlanta, Georgia assists GAE with U.S. students seeking internships in Germany. However, the GAE administers the program and is the sole point of contact for all questions regarding the internship program.

### II. Why Apply for a GAE Internship?

The GAE Internship Program provides German students and young German professionals with an unrivaled opportunity to work with some of the leading companies in the U.S. The internship offers "real world" experience that helps develop critical skills for your professional career. It

is often these cross-cultural experiences that make the internship a memorable part of your career.

Under normal circumstances, such internships would be difficult to obtain. Therefore, they offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make valuable international contacts and can serve as a stepping stone for future career advancement.

Participating in the GAE internship program also provides interns with practical experience to accompany their theoretical studies. By immersing themselves in a new culture, work environment, and language, interns practice first-hand many of the subjects they have studied.

The GAE Internship Program also offers participants an experience that distinguishes them in an increasingly competitive job market. Practical work experience with an international firm highlights that individual's capacity for innovation, cultural flexibility, and creativity, skills that translate well into future professional positions. Finally, participants have an opportunity for personal growth and to learn more about themselves and their career goals.

Testimonials from former interns about their internships can be found on the GAE website at: <http://german-american-exchange.com/>

### **III. Requirements for the GAE Internship Program**

To be eligible for the GAE Internship Program, applicants must:

- Have intermediate (B2-level) knowledge of the English language.
- Have completed at least two (2) semesters of university coursework, or five years of work experience after having completed a technical Ausbildung by the start of their internship.
- Be willing to commit to at least a full three-month internship in the U.S. However, many companies would prefer longer internships of 4 to 12 months.

### **IV. Important Qualities to Demonstrate**

It also is important that interns demonstrate certain qualities.

For example, participants should be prepared to live independently during the course of their internship. Interns are required to maintain a high level of professionalism, ethical behavior, and decorum. In addition, interns should demonstrate a willingness to learn about different cultures and further international understanding. They also should have a strong work ethic and the ability to work well independently and in teams. A strong interest in the English language also is a plus.

### **V. The Internship Application Process**

To apply, candidates must submit the following documents:

A. Application Form (in English)

Please complete all relevant fields on the Application Form. Answers must be typed.

B. Personal Essay (in English)

Attach a brief statement (no more than 500 words) explaining your academic training, interests, and personal and career goals, and why these would make you a good candidate for the GAE internship program.

C. Resume (Lebenslauf) (one copy in German and one copy in English)

Include a one-page resume that briefly describes your education (including any relevant course work); work experience and internships; previous studies abroad or international experiences; extra-curricular activities; and hobbies and interests.

D. Certification of English Proficiency

A school certificate or other documentation demonstrating your intermediate (B2-level) knowledge of the English language. Certification documents can be written in German or English.

E. Two Letters of Recommendation (in English or accompanied by an English translation)

Letters of recommendation should be written by someone who can describe your unique qualities, skills, and abilities. The recommendation should state the nature of that person's relationship to you; how long and in what capacity they have known you; and relevant accomplishments, personal qualities, areas of knowledge, coursework, etc. that make you an attractive candidate for this internship. The letters should be addressed to: "To Whom It May Concern."

You also will be required to submit additional documents to obtain a U.S. work permit and visa, in the event your internship application is accepted by a U.S. company. These documents include:

1. Form J-1 Visa Application

All potential interns must submit a color scan of a J-1-Visa application, with all required attachments. (for the application form see: [https://go-j1.com/fileadmin/USA\\_NewYork\\_goj1/Dokumente/Downloadbereich/Participant\\_Application\\_and\\_Agreement\\_Form\\_2019.pdf](https://go-j1.com/fileadmin/USA_NewYork_goj1/Dokumente/Downloadbereich/Participant_Application_and_Agreement_Form_2019.pdf); for additional documents see: <https://go-j1.com/en/forms-downloads/forms-downloads/>).

2. Copy of Passport

A color scan of the first two pages of your passport containing your passport number, name, nationality, birth date, and city of birth. Passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the program ends.

3. Certificate of Enrollment from Your University (if applicable)

Current students must submit a copy of a Certificate of Enrollment that is dated, signed, and stamped by the Registrar's Office of your university or proof of a technical Ausbildung and five (5) years of work experience. Please complete all fields on the Certificate of Enrollment and mark the GAE internship as mandatory. Please also send a copy of the signed Certificate of Enrollment to the GAE at the address below:

German American Exchange e.V.  
Rückel & Collegen  
Kardinal-Faulhaber-Strasse 15  
80333 München  
E-Mail [info@german-america-exchange.com](mailto:info@german-america-exchange.com)

Please give yourself enough time to prepare a professional application with all necessary documents. GAE can only submit your application to participating companies if it is fully complete.

**COMPLETED APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY GAE NO LATER THAN MIDNIGHT 15<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Applications submitted before 15<sup>th</sup> April 2022, will be processed and made available to participating companies for their consideration on a rolling basis and in the order they are received.**

## **VI. The Company Selection Process**

Once you have submitted your completed application to GAE, it will be uploaded on a rolling basis for review by U.S. companies participating in the GAE program.

GAE will inform you by email if a company expresses interest in you as an intern. Please check the email address provided on your application. Once you are notified by GAE of a company's interest, a company's representative will contact you directly to arrange for an interview. We encourage all applicants to discuss matters such as housing, mentoring, and the internship contract during the interview.

The internship contract is negotiated directly between the intern and the participating U.S. company. GAE has no involvement with negotiating internship contracts. GAE also takes no responsibility for the terms and conditions of individual internship contracts. Interns, therefore, should read their employment contracts carefully before agreeing to, or signing, any terms and conditions. Please contact a respective GAE representative should you have additional questions.

## **VII. Internship Placement and Work Permits**

**Once you accept an internship position, you will be required to complete the GAE Internship Certification Form. This form documents your participation in the internship.**

The German-American Chamber of Commerce in the U.S. will then assist you in obtaining a work permit and visa from the relevant U.S. agencies. This will require you to submit a J-1 visa application and a Certificate of Enrollment from your university or, if you have graduated, documentation of your university degree or certification of five years' work experience. You also will be required to submit a color scan of the first two pages of your passport. Additional documents also may be required from your host company. Please note that many host companies will not complete their required visa forms until after they have received your signed internship contract.

## **VIII. Orientation and Welcome Ceremony**

It is possible that GAE may provide a pre-departure orientation for participating interns. The date and location of such an orientation, if one occurs, will be announced at the appropriate time.

In addition, GAE currently is planning to hold its annual Business Day in July 2022 in Stuttgart. GAE's Business Day typically includes representatives of major U.S. and German companies and allows interns to interact with members of the international business community. An agenda for the 2022 Business Day will be circulated once planning is completed.

## **IX. Intern Compensation**

Interns are expected to earn a minimum monthly compensation from their respective companies. However, specific compensation packages vary from firm to firm. Interns also should expect deductions from their gross salary that include social security payments and tax deductions.

Participants should contact their company representative directly if they have questions regarding their internship compensation.

## **X. Fees**

Every applicant is required to pay an initial application fee of EUR 50. Once an applicant has been selected by a participating company, the applicant must pay GAE an additional processing fee of EUR 150. All fees are non-refundable and payable by bank wire transfer to GAE. Fees should be wired to the following bank account:

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Kardinal-Faulhaber-Strasse 15  
80333 München  
E-Mail [info@german-america-exchange.de](mailto:info@german-america-exchange.de)

**Kontoinhaber:** German American Exchange e.V.  
**Bank:** Commerzbank München  
**BIC:** COBADEFFXXX  
**IBAN:** DE41 7004 0041 0471 6445 00

## **XI. Housing**

Finding housing for the period of your internship can be challenging, depending on where your internship is located. Therefore, interns are encouraged to start their housing search as soon as they are selected. Some employers provide interns with housing options. However, most interns should plan to locate and pay for housing on their own.

Some interns choose to coordinate a home-stay with an employee from their firm or a member of the local community. In the past, interns also have pursued individual apartments or decided to share an apartment with one or more roommates. Depending on the time of year, universities in some U.S. cities offer student dormitories as temporary housing or provide links to private landlords. Interns should begin their housing search as soon as they have committed to their internship. They also should take reasonable precautions when renting housing and before signing rental contracts. Talk with your host company should you have additional questions.

## **XII. Medical Insurance**

All participants of the internship program must carry valid health insurance that covers them while they work in the U.S. Participants may be able to use their insurance coverage from Germany. However, interns should verify with their insurance provider that their German health insurance plan is valid in the U.S. for the duration of their internship. Interns also should

discuss with their health insurer any restrictions on coverage, additional costs, and the timing of reimbursement. For example, under some plans, interns working in the U.S. may be required to pay out of pocket for their medical expenses and only receive reimbursement from their German health insurer at a later date.

Interns are strongly advised to contact their health insurance companies to discuss the details of their health insurance coverage in the U.S.

### **XIII. Liability Insurance**

All interns are required to carry valid liability insurance for the duration of their internship in the US. If you have liability coverage in Germany, please contact your insurance provider to ensure that your German liability coverage also will be valid in the U.S. for the duration of your internship. Please contact your host company or insurance carrier should you have additional questions.

### **XIV. Budgeting for Your Stay in the U.S.**

Applicants should carefully consider the costs of an internship abroad. Costs often vary depending on where your internship is located. For example, large metropolitan cities tend to be more expensive than smaller, rural communities.

A. Housing. Unless you have housing provided by your firm, all interns should consider the cost of rent, utilities, and a security deposit. It also is important to ask whether these costs must be paid in advance. Interns also should carefully evaluate the cost of different types of housing and living arrangements.

B. Food. Think ahead about your dietary needs during your stay in the U.S. Estimating grocery costs will give you a clearer sense of your required monthly budget.

C. Transportation. Some companies cover the cost of local public transportation in the form of a monthly ticket (Monatskarte). However, this is not the case for all interns. Therefore, interns should consider the time and cost of commuting between one's residence and place of work on regional trains, subways, trams, and/or busses. In addition, interns are responsible for organizing, as well as paying for, their flights to and from the U.S.

D. Internet. Internet service may not be included in the cost of your housing. If not, you will need to investigate the cost of external providers in your city.

E. Phone. Most major phone providers in the U.S. offer pre-paid phone options. Check online for current rates and conditions. Alternatively, many local merchants also offer prepaid or monthly phone plans. If you are interested in using your German phone abroad, verify that your plan covers the U.S. Otherwise, if someone is trying to call you from an American phone, you and they may be charged international calling rates.

F. Personal Expenses. After calculating "must-haves," you should consider your personal expenses. Do you plan to travel in the U.S. after your internship or sight-see in your new town? Make sure you have budgeted enough to make the most of your time in the U.S.

## **XV. Starting your Internship**

We strongly encourage you to discuss your host company's expectations and work environment before you begin your internship. Firm policies vary regarding dress code, expected work schedule, vacation time, payment schedules, etc. Therefore, you will benefit from understanding your company's culture, your role within the company, and your manager's expectations before starting your internship.

Similarly, interns should meet regularly with their company managers during their internship to discuss their performance and whether they are meeting the company's expectations. Seek feedback early and often. This will increase your chances of a successful experience.

If your company pays you through direct bank deposit, you may find it useful to open a U.S. bank account through a local or online bank. Be sure to inform your host company of your bank details, if this is the case.

Please contact a GAE representative immediately if any major changes occur regarding your internship or if you fall ill for an extended period of time.

## **XVI. Office and Work Environment**

For some interns, this will be your first opportunity to work abroad in a professional work environment. Therefore, you may not be sure how to approach this internship and what is expected of you. There are several points worth mentioning as you consider applying.

1. Always maintain the highest level of professionalism throughout your stay in the U.S. This includes properly scheduling your vacation days (in case your company grants you any) and notifying your employer promptly when your absence from work is required (e.g., sick days, vacation and personal requirements).

2. Become acquainted with the daily operations of your job. This includes familiarizing yourself with work standards and procedures, mandatory gatherings, and work-related events.

3. Laws regarding alcohol are different in the U.S. and for some of you this will be your first experience in an environment with more restrictive customs and regulations. Always make informed and responsible decisions.

4. Follow through with plans and commitments to your bosses and co-workers. Communication will be the single biggest key to your success. Contact your manager immediately if you have a problem with a task. Listen to your co-workers, be respectful, and don't be afraid to ask questions.

5. Accept feedback and constructive criticism from the people around you. Never forget you are there to be exposed to new ways of thinking. Therefore, you cannot always rely on previously conceived ideas to guide you. Being open to new ideas is one of the most important guiding principles of this internship.

6. Above all else, recognize that you are not only a visitor in a foreign country, but also an ambassador for your own country and the transatlantic relationship. Throughout your internship in the U.S., your conduct should be professional and respectful of local customs and the organizations you represent.



## **XVIII. Ending Your Internship**

Before ending your internship, we recommend that you request a written performance evaluation from your host company that gives you feedback on the projects you worked on. This can be invaluable in helping you learn from your internship experience. Previous interns also have found it helpful to ask for a personal interview with your supervisor before leaving your internship.

After your internship, you will be required to complete a questionnaire about your experience. It will ask about your host company and your personal observations about your experience in the U.S. Selected responses and photos will be featured on the GAE's official website.

Finally, our German American Internship Program Facebook group can help interns get to know each other, keep in touch, and share helpful information.

Good luck! We look forward to receiving your internship application!

## **US-German Internship Program - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Are there mandatory events that students must attend?**

Not at this time. However, further information will be provided to interns by GAE if any such event is planned.

### **Will I have a say in my placement?**

Students have the option to state on their applications in what general field and geographic area they would prefer to work. However, GAE cannot ensure that any students will be: (a) selected by a participating company; or (b) placed in a business field or geographic location they wish.

Participating companies will review candidates' profiles - including resumes, personal statements and applications - and then invite candidates for interviews on a case-by-case basis. Students may decline an offer should they choose. However, it is not guaranteed that another placement will be available.

### **Will GAE cover my transportation costs?**

No. Students are responsible for organizing and paying for the cost of their flights to the U.S. and back. Students should plan to budget approximately USD 1,000-1,500 for round-trip air travel to the U.S. Fares may vary based upon the flight path, when the flight was booked, airline provider, etc.

### **Will my host company help with my housing?**

Some host companies may provide interns with housing, or assist in finding housing. However, most interns should plan on locating and covering the cost of their housing during their internship. Host companies may be able to provide suggestions regarding where best to find housing in your local area. However, ultimately this is the intern's responsibility. We recommend that interns remain in contact with their host companies during their housing search. Should you encounter any significant problems, contact your host company.

**Will I be expected to work full-time?**

Yes, the GAE internship is considered a full-time position. Daily and/or weekly schedules must be organized between you and your host company. However, you should plan on committing to a full-time schedule (i.e., 40 hours per week).

**Will I work with other interns?**

Some host companies have multiple interns from the GAE Internship Program, but this is not always the case. In many cases, you will have the opportunity to work alongside other interns at your host company who are unaffiliated with the GAE program. This can be a great opportunity to get to know individuals in your community, as well as learn from other students.

**Are there any fees involved with the Program?**

Every student is required to pay an initial application fee of EUR 50. Once a student has been selected by a host company, the student also must pay an additional processing fee of EUR 150.

**Do I get a refund if I am not selected by a host company?**

No. There is no placement guarantee for applicants and all fees are non-refundable.

**Will I receive a work contract?**

Yes, but all work contracts are negotiated and entered into strictly between interns and their host companies. Interns should address this topic directly with their host companies prior to their internship. GAE is not responsible for individual work contracts between interns and their host companies. Should you have further questions, please contact your host company directly.