

Going International Means Going There! Until the Pandemic!?

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Going there has been the mode of international field study projects for 20 years

- **Going there** has been an instrumental philosophy in the A505/A582 International Field Study Projects / IFRS Boot-Camp for the past decade. We have refined the projects and the boot-camp to be a complementary set of assignments
- Pandemic arrives and no travel is permitted; we did a 180° and found projects for 32 students in 17 different organizations – challenges and satisfaction remained high



international-institute-for-business-newsletter-spring-summer-2019.pdf

International field study projects are in essence – ‘internships for value added

The international field study project is a 7 weeks unpaid internship for the 3/2 MBA-Accounting students in an international setting each April and May. The host organization provides a project and the student works full-time on the project for the 7 weeks as part of their academic coursework. The IFRS boot-camp is the one-week immersive course on IFRS/Global reporting issues that is designed to prepare them for the field study project. Thus, prior to going to the location, the one-week immersion course is invested in learning about the country's/host organization's background and, if possible, the specific topic/project.

Students' responses are overwhelmingly positive

- **Pique students' interest** – We have an overwhelmingly positive reaction by the students on their experiences when they return from the location. Keep in mind that regardless of all that we do in academics to 'teach' them about international; nothing is like GOING THERE! The student population is predominantly U.S. and most have never been outside of the U.S. So, there is some trepidation in the beginning but the adjustment period is very short. Most become veteran travelers by the 2nd or 3rd weekend. On their return to the U.S. they are transformed into young professionals with international experience and demonstrated 'resume-worthy' projects completed. Yes, now they have seen international 'accounting' and recognize the value.

An Intense focus on self-learning is key

Ability to enhance student learning and to help the student learn on his or her own – this criterion is met with intensity. The one-week boot-camp is oriented to the students' locations, host organizations, and specific projects. Thus, the only way to accomplish this is to learn quickly on your own AND to share learning across locations and projects. The students are not chaperoned nor are they micro-managed by faculty! Their responsibility is to produce value-added projects for their host organization. This is magnified by the one-week boot-camp as it is intended for the student[s] to hit the ground running at the host organizations' locations. Specific responses from students returning are an increased sense of humility [the world is bigger than their little world] and pride [the project produced was value-added in a situation never faced before where English may not be the first language]. One response may capture it all: "I wondered when I landed at a strange airport not in the U.S if I had made a major mistake; but I discovered this was the best learning experience of my life"

Our approach matches up to the AICPA and the IMA competency frameworks

Emphasis on the IMA Management Accounting Competencies AICPA Core Competency Framework and its defined set of skill-based competencies – These complementary ‘courses’ address nearly every aspect of the AICPA Core Competence Framework. Specifically, they focus on:

- Global and industry perspectives - Identify the unique global and industry factors, and analyze the related risks and opportunities and their impact on an organization.
- Research - Identify, access and apply relevant professional frameworks, standards and guidance, as well as other information for analysis and to make informed decisions.
- In a closer examination of the other competencies, we find that we have had projects on each and every competency. Of course, not every student gets the same elements but collectively, we are able to confirm that the students have covered every topic in the framework.