

Why I'll miss the internship at the Swiss IAESTE National Office

Self-reflection through a self-interview

Who are you and what made you decide to do an internship at the National Office of IAESTE Switzerland?

I'm not a classic IAESTE intern as one knows from the exchange program. I am an expert in German studies and writing my PhD. As a communicative person and a passionate writer and author, I wanted to see for myself if there is something else outside science for me. I think deep inside I'm a copywriter, if not an artist. Actually I was looking for a permanent job first, but to get into advertising industry without concrete work experience is very difficult. When I saw the job advertisement, I knew that it was the opportunity to get a glimpse without having to commit myself. Now I am responsible for public relations and marketing and communications.

What are your areas of responsibility? How does an average work day look like for you?

I think every working day is unique. I am working in different fields. At the beginning of the internship especially job raising was very important. I called the employers to ask them if they are interested in participating in our program. I sent them information material and answered their questions. But I have also conducted information sessions for the students at the universities.

In addition, I have the opportunity to develop my creativity. I write articles for various channels of communication, I take care of the complete social media area, translate texts in English and French and organize promotional activities. Furthermore, I support the team by helping out spontaneously.

In the morning I do more administrative tasks. I call companies and press offices, answer e-mails ... In the afternoon I dedicate myself to more creative orders. I design flyers, conceive stories for our texts and do some research. Then there are always special jobs, such as to design IAESTE stamps for Christmas or to conduct interviews. As you can see, it's very varied. I could continue the list forever.

Are there any things you do not like?

Sometimes I'm so excited about an idea that I do not see immediately that it does not fit the IAESTE character. Then there are fortunately a few people who bring me back to the ground of reality.

Depending on the mood of the day I'm not talking so much with people on the phone. And I do not like it when at the other end there are rude or completely uninterested people. And probably like everyone else, I hate to write protocols. ;-)

And what kinds of things do you like most?

I love my independence and freedom. I've always wanted a job in which responsibilities are compatible with my individuality. I am every day from 8.30 am in the office, but creativity sometimes has its own rhythm and then I can work for example from home in the evening.

The interpersonal atmosphere in the office is great. I have worked and seen a lot, but the team at the National Office is unique. We work more or less in an open office and are very happy about each student passing by. I am amazed by the cohesion, understanding, openness... The team reflects the IAESTE spirit. Bringing people and worlds together, accepting other cultures... All my colleagues are

always very involved and stand up for the interests of the IAESTE interns. Therefore, it is important that the internships are paid. Students must be able to cover their fixed costs such as rent and food. In addition, the students are supervised by the Local Committees in the exchange country. These are all volunteers who support the concept of IAESTE and do cool stuff with the students on the weekends. They show the students a less touristic and commercial, but more authentic and personal site. I could never work for an organization that is incompatible with my sense of morality.

I also think it's always nice and exciting to work with so many different people. On the one hand, there are the employers who may have already done an internship through IAESTE and want to give the organization something back. These are all people who like to work with young students and want to teach them something, who are open to new inputs and ideas. There is not only an impact between novices and experts, but also between different generations and experiences. Isn't it a wonderful idea? On the other hand, there are the



students who often seem so helpless. They are so cute! Our team likes to support them, even though we would like them to be more independent sometimes.

Was there ever an unpleasant or particularly funny situation for you?

In the National Office we always laugh a lot. Of course, we work seriously but especially the lunch breaks are very amusing. Particularly one of my working colleagues is very quick-witted and likes to bring me out of my shell. Once she made me blush by making a cheeky comment. That was embarrassing... Nevertheless, I feel respected and taken seriously by all colleagues. I can always take a lot of responsibility. Sometimes I forget that I am "only an intern".

But there was another situation which was very funny, although it has to do with a failure... Recently we organized an "Open Day". Everyone in the team baked something for this special event. Biscuits, cakes, muffins... However, a total of only three guys has appeared. We ate so many sweets that day that we all stood under a sugar shock at the end of the event. Obviously, the time for the day was chosen improperly, but we could laugh at it at least.

What experience will accompany you after the internship?

During my internship I learned to overcome my inhibitions. I've always been an open person, but now I can better reach out to strangers. I think I'll keep the IAESTE spirit, too. It does not matter, what social background you have or what skin color, nationality, gender or sexual orientation. IAESTE supports all students who want to gain work experience and who want others to benefit from their expertise. I want to continue to explore the world with this approach.

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