



MAST International

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Training & Internship Program Information



MISSION

To improve global understanding by providing educational and cultural enrichment through international exchange.

What is MAST International?

Is MAST right for me?



THE MAST INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

MAST International is an international educational exchange program that combines a practical, hands-on, learning experience in agriculture with a classroom experience through the University of Minnesota. Previously called the **Minnesota Agricultural Student Trainee** program, MAST began in 1949 with an exchange of agricultural students between Minnesota and Sweden. Since then, more than 8,000 young people from over 80 countries have participated in the program.

Currently, MAST International offers Training, Internship, and Management Training Programs in Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry and Fishing. All three types of programs are designed to enhance the skills and expertise of exchange visitors in these fields, however they have slightly different qualifications and regulations which are described in more detail on the next page.

FEATURES OF THE PROGRAM

Practical Experience

Trainees and Interns have the opportunity to live in a different culture and acquire new skills through day-to-day hands-on experiences in agriculture, horticulture, and related fields. They are exposed to a variety of technologies, skill-building experiences, and other relevant activities in order to further their knowledge and interests. Participants are placed with approved and qualified Host Trainers.

Semester Study Program

Trainees and Interns may choose to enhance their practical experience with a semester of classes at the University of Minnesota. This opportunity is a unique aspect of the MAST International program. Participants sit in on lectures, participate in labs, and interact with distinguished professors and students from the U.S. and around the world. This exchange of ideas promotes mutual understanding and builds long-term international relationships.

Cultural Opportunities

In addition to the practical experience and semester study program, Trainees and Interns learn about daily life in the United States, make friends from around the world, and gain an appreciation of their own and others' cultures. MAST Alumni value the friendships they make with Americans as well as with people from all over the world.

MAST International is a program of the University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, and is designated by the U.S. Department of State as an Exchange Visitor Program.

The MAST International Program

Who can participate?

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OPTIONS

MAST International provides educational experiences following the U.S. Department of State regulations for educational and cultural exchanges. The following chart will help you decide which program is best for you.

General Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 to 32 years of age • Have conversational English skills • Able to adapt to changing experiences • Be self-motivated and hard-working 		
	INTERNSHIP PROGRAM	TRAINING PROGRAM	MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM
Definitions	An Intern is a person wanting a work-based learning program that reinforces her/his current or recent academic studies.	A Trainee is a person wishing to gain additional practice in her/his occupational field based on previous studies or work experience	A Management Trainee is a person who would like to develop advanced management or supervisory skills based on previous studies or work experience Note: Limited number of placements for highly qualified trainees
Eligibility	EITHER: Currently enrolled in a program of study at a degree- or certificate-granting post-secondary academic institution, preferably in a field of study related to the internship OR Graduated from such an institution no more than 12 months prior to the exchange visitor program start date	EITHER: Possess a degree or professional certificate from a foreign post-secondary academic institution and have at least one year of prior related work experience in the occupational field (acquired outside the United States) OR Have five years of work experience outside the United States in the occupational field	EITHER: Possess a degree or professional certificate from a foreign post-secondary academic institution and at least one year of prior related work experience in the occupational field (acquired outside the United States) OR Have five years of work experience outside the United States in the occupational field
Maximum Program Length	12 months	18 months	18 months
Length of Practical Experience	Up to 12 months	Up to 12 months	Up to 18 months
With Study Option	Up to 8 months practical experience 4 months study experience	Up to 12 months practical experience 4 months study experience	Up to 14 months practical experience 4 months study experience

For a successful program, it is very important for applicants to understand the information in this booklet before applying to MAST International. It is also important that participants are open to new experiences and committed to learning about a new culture.

Practical Experience

What kinds of placements are available?

PLACEMENT TYPES

Beef

Description: Cow-calf or feedlot operations. Size ranges from small beef/crop farms (50–200 head) to large beef/crop farms (200–1000 head) to large beef operations or ranches (200–1000+ head). Smaller farms are mostly in the Midwest, with large ranches located in western states. Most beef farms also grow crops; therefore most students work in the field. There are a very limited number of beef placements without crops.

Activities: general care and feeding of cattle, calving, treating disease and injury, castrating, branding, artificial insemination, fencing, building and equipment repair, activities related to crop production.

- **Write your preferences on the application for cow-calf or feedlot, farm size, beef only or beef/crop combination and any other information that could help us match you with a host trainer.**

Note: Typical placement period is from January/February to December. Limited number of placements at other times.



Crops

Description: Row crop farms grow corn, soybeans, sugar beets, potatoes, edible beans, etc. Small grain farms grow wheat, oats, barley, alfalfa hay, etc. Farm sizes range from small (500–2000 acres) to medium (2000–5000 acres) to large (5000+ acres), with great variety in size and age of farm machinery. Some placements also have livestock.

Activities: preparing soil, applying fertilizer and pesticides, seeding, irrigating, harvesting, machinery upkeep and repair, storing crops, hauling produce or seed.

- **Write your preferences on the application for types of crops, farm size, and any other information that could help us match you with a host trainer.**

Note: Typical placement period is from March/April to November/December. June, July and August placements provide harvest-related activities. Limited number of placements in January, February, and October.

Dairy

Description: Farm size ranges from small family farms (50–150 cows) to medium size farms (150–400 cows) to large dairy farms (400+ cows). Large farms have milking parlors while small farms have either milking parlors or pipeline milking systems (tie-stall). Some dairy farms grow crops; however in most placements students do not work in the field. Each farm may have a different focus (e.g. milking, nutrition, genetics, herd health, or a combination of these), so be sure to indicate the area of skill development in which you are most interested.

Activities: milking, calving, ration formulation, treating disease and injury, feeding, artificial insemination, cleaning barns, building and equipment repair.

- **Write your preferences on the application for farm size, type of milking system, and any other information that could help us match you with a host trainer.**

Note: Typical placement period is 6–12 months beginning at various times throughout the year.

Equine Husbandry

Description: Great variety in horse placements. Types of placements include racehorses, pleasure horses, or western horses. Most placements do not include riding. Each operation is highly specialized (e.g. stud farm, thoroughbred racing, boarding of dressage or western horses, etc.), so be sure to indicate the area in which you are most interested.

Activities: foaling, general care and feeding, ration formulation, treating disease and injury, cleaning, exercising horses, preparing animals for sale, building and equipment repair.

Note: Typical placement period is 6-12 months beginning at various times throughout the year.

Fruits and Vegetables / Farmers Market

Description: Crops include tree fruits (citrus, apples, and cherries), small berries, grapes, or vegetables (tomatoes, lettuce, herbs, etc.) Some operations sell their products at Farmers Markets.

Activities: planting, fertilizing, irrigating, weed and insect control, pruning, propagation, harvesting, processing, packaging, and distribution. Farmers Market placements prepare, package and sell fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural products.

Note: Typical placement period is from March/April to November. Limited number of placements available at other times, focusing on harvest-related activities.

Landscape

Description: Placements with small landscape companies or large garden centers. Trainees and interns work at a variety of public, commercial and/or residential sites. There are limited opportunities to do landscape design.

Activities: planting trees, shrubs, and flowers, laying sod, using small machinery (small lawn mowers, tractors, earth moving equipment), building landscape structures.

Note: Typical placement period is from March/April to November/December. Limited number of placements at other times.



Greenhouse / Nursery / Garden Center

Description: Size ranges from small family operations to large operations with many employees. Products grown include ornamental flowers, shrubs, and trees; few of the plants grown are fruit and vegetables. On small operations trainees and interns take part in all activities; large operations have separation of duties. Each operation may have a different focus (e.g. retail, wholesale, growing, or a combination of these), so be sure to indicate the area of skill development in which you are most interested.

Activities: preparing soil, planting and propagation, watering, insect and disease control, weed control, pruning, retail sales and customer service, shipping.

- **Write your preferences on the application for size of operation and any information that could help us match you with a host trainer.**

Note: Typical placement period is 5-8 months beginning in January/February. Some placements are available at other times.

*P*ractical Experience



Swine

Description: Confinement operations in breeding, farrowing, and finishing. Some swine farms also grow crops; however in most placements students do not work in the field. On many farms students take part in all activities; large farms have separation of duties.

Activities: general care and feeding, cleaning, treating disease and injury, artificial insemination, castrating, building and equipment repair, taking animals to sale.

Note: Typical placement period is 6-12 months beginning at various times throughout the year.

Winery

Description: Winery cellar experience with limited placements available in laboratories and viticulture. Size ranges from small custom crush operations to large production wineries. Wineries are located in California, Oregon, Washington, and New York.

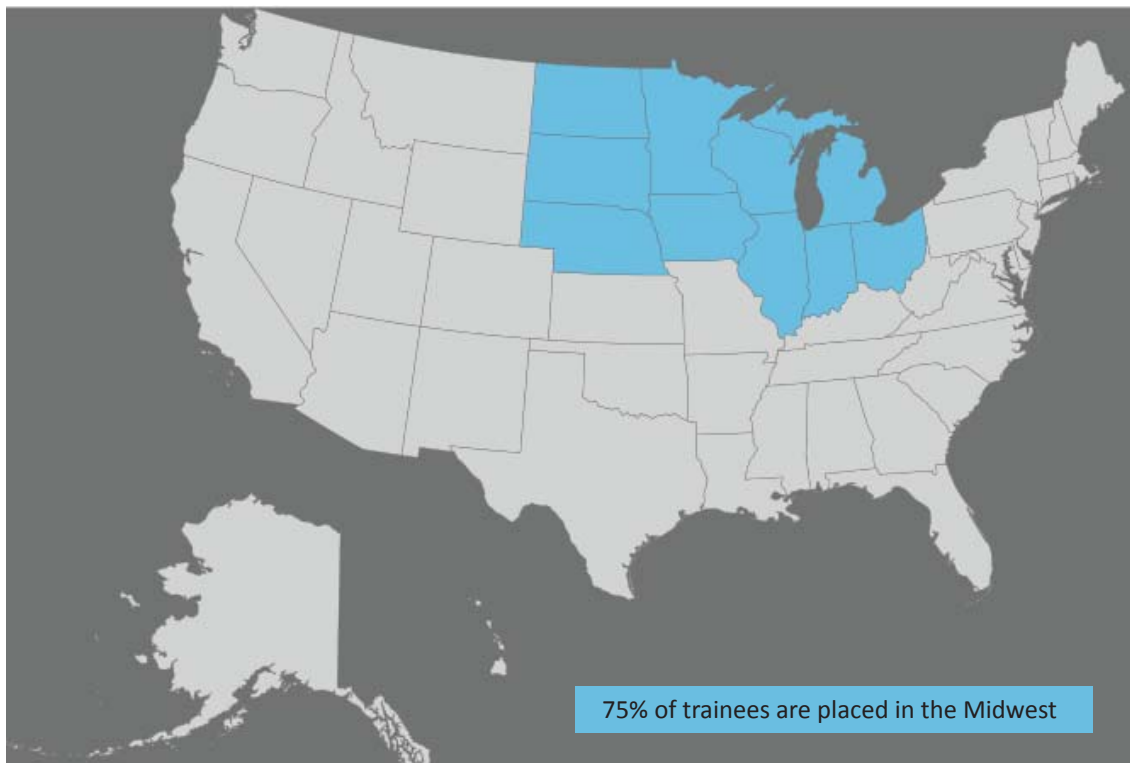
Activities: Learn about standard operating procedures for cellar equipment; performing pump-overs and punch downs; fruit crushing and preparation; preparing and topping off barrels; perform cleaning and sanitation of tanks, pumps, crush pad, presses, crusher, and floors; bottling; monitoring fermentation; learn about wine-making styles and varietal differences.

Note: Winery placements are short-term only from August/September - November. Must have at least two or more seasons of experience in your home country.

- **Write your preferences on the application for any type of placement, including varietal preference or experience, and any information that could help us match you with a host trainer.**

Specialized Placement

Description: Specialized production, agribusiness, and research placements. Specialized production placements could include golf courses, bee-keeping, florists, landscape design, wineries, poultry farms, food processors, organic farms, fish farms, and forests. Agribusiness placements could include cooperatives, grain marketers, finance companies, and environmental companies. Research placements involve both lab and field work. Limited number of placements for highly qualified trainees and interns. Excellent English required.



Where
are the
placements?

How are
placements
made?

Where will I
live?

TRAINING AND INTERNSHIPS IN THE USA

Practical training in agriculture is hard work (especially in the USA). Host trainers will teach participants about their operation, spending the majority of time on daily work activities. The amount of responsibility given to the trainee or intern depends on his/her skills and English ability.

Participants must be prepared for the nature and amount of work that is involved in American agriculture and horticulture. It is also important to note that MAST International is designed as a skills training program. Although participants are paid while at the placement site, the primary purpose of the program is learning and cultural exchange.

Location of Training and Internship Sites

75% of the trainees are placed in the Midwest, with over 40% placed in Minnesota.

Agricultural placements are usually located in rural isolated areas. Limited placements are available in urban areas.

Host Trainers

MAST Host Trainers are screened, interviewed, and evaluated. Many have participated in a host trainer orientation and have participated in the program for several years.

Selection Process

First, Country Partners pre-select and interview candidates. These applications are forwarded to MAST International for review. Staff members then attempt to find a placement site that matches the applicant's interests. Next, the application is sent to the prospective host trainer for consideration. When a host trainer agrees to work with an applicant, the MAST International Partner will be informed to confirm the placement with the applicant, and then the visa process will begin.

Living Arrangements

Some MAST International participants live with and take all meals with a family; others live on their own and are responsible for some or all meals. Applicants indicate a preference for living and housing options; however, this choice cannot be guaranteed.

*P*ractical Experience



Compensation

The minimum wage in the U.S. varies by state and ranges from \$7.25 per hour and higher. Host trainers are allowed to deduct up to \$250 from each participant's monthly pay for room and board. Participants should expect to work 40 hours per week. Overtime will not be paid except where State or Federal law mandates it or where it is the choice of the host trainer. Some placements may have an alternative compensation package which shall be agreed upon by all parties prior to the beginning of the program. Note: Trainees and interns are subject to State and Federal income taxes, which may be withheld from the participant's paycheck.

MAST International recognizes that the value of room and board will differ from urban to rural areas and from region to region. It will cost less to live in some areas, but more expensive areas may offer extra activities not found in other regions. Host trainers assist in finding living arrangements that are a reasonable cost for the area.

Work Day

Participants should be prepared to work long hours each day. Some placements have fixed schedules and participants work 8 hours per day, 5 days per week. On other training and internship sites, participants have schedules of 10 hours per day, 6 days per week. Also, a short growing season and unpredictable weather often mean participants work long hours during peak periods (planting or harvest, for example). During these times, it is not uncommon to work 12–14 hours per day, 7 days per week. MAST International monitors the number of hours worked to ensure a quality experience, but participants should be aware that they may find the hours to be long and difficult.

Time Off

Participants should receive a minimum of one day off each week of the practical training period. Time off is unpaid and may be scheduled as one day per week or two days every other week (agreed upon between the participant and the host trainer). Exceptions will occur during peak periods when participants are expected to be flexible about arranging their time off.

Vacations

Participants will receive two days of unpaid vacation for each month of the practical training period. These days may be accumulated, and should be arranged to be taken during the practical training period. Timing of the vacation must be approved by the host trainer and may not be taken during peak work periods. In addition, participants have a 30-day grace period following their program to prepare for departure from the U.S.

Program Length – Interns

Interns are limited to a maximum of 12 months participation on a J-1 visa. The MAST International program offers up to 12 month internships, with an option to participate in a Semester Study Program. Internships for participants choosing to do a Semester Study Program will be limited to 8 months of practical experience to allow time for the academic training. The actual length of program is based on the Individual Internship Placement Plan offered by the host trainer and MAST International. Interns are not guaranteed the entire 12 months permitted under the regulations.

Program Length – Trainees

Trainees are limited to a maximum of 18 months participation on a J-1 visa. The MAST International program includes up to 12 months of practical training and may be followed by an optional Semester Study Program. The actual length of program is based on the Individual Training Placement Plan offered by the host trainer and MAST International. Trainees are not guaranteed the entire 18 months permitted under the regulations.

Program Length – Management Trainees

Management trainees are limited to a maximum of 18 months participation on a J-1 visa. The MAST International program offers 3 to 18 month placements. The actual length of program is based on the Individual Training Placement Plan offered by the host trainer and MAST International. Management trainees are not guaranteed the entire 18 months permitted under the regulations.

Support

The MAST International staff has extensive international experience and training. They are responsible for providing educational leadership and guidance to all participants during their time on the program. Staff members assist in developing Training/Internship Placement Plans for participants, provide orientations upon arrival in the U.S., visit trainees and interns at their training sites, support and advise participants and hosts throughout their time on the MAST International program, and evaluate the experiences of trainees, interns, and host trainers.



Trainee and Intern Responsibilities

Participants on the MAST International program have responsibilities to the United States Government and to MAST International. Participants are required to follow J-1 visa regulations and MAST International program policies. It is important for participants to remember that they are ambassadors for the MAST International program and for their individual countries.

MAST International Partners

To better serve participants, MAST International works with representatives throughout the world. MAST International Partners help explain the program, evaluate prospective applicants, and assist participants when applying for entry visas. Partners provide pre-departure orientations and may assist with travel.

Semester Study Program

What is the Semester Study Program?

Where is it?

What type of classes can I take?

What are the requirements?

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE IN THE U.S.

The MAST International program is unique. Our program complements the practical experience by offering an affordable academic experience at the University of Minnesota, an internationally recognized land-grant university.

The Semester Study Program is offered through the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS). Participants pay reduced tuition and are not required to pass the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) to be registered for courses. MAST International participants receive a certificate documenting their participation in classes. The main objectives of the Semester Study Program are to:

- Acquire an enhanced perspective in academic and/or technical fields
- Interact with U.S. students, faculty, and professionals
- Gain an understanding of a top research university
- Improve English language skills, and
- Enjoy cultural opportunities available in the greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul area

In addition, participants value the chance to generate life-long ties with other program participants from around the world. Although an optional part of the program, MAST participants are strongly encouraged to include the Semester Study Program as part of their total experience.

CFANS Course Offerings

Participants select from courses offered by CFANS. The College has some of the best departments in the United States. Participants may need to have background coursework or professor permission to enroll in the higher-level courses. A variety of courses may be offered in the following disciplines:

- Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Education
- Agronomy and Plant Genetics
- Animal Science
- Applied Economics
- Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering
- Entomology
- Environmental Sciences, Policy, and Management
- Fisheries and Wildlife
- Food Science and Nutrition
- Forest Resources
- Horticultural Science
- Plant Pathology
- Soil, Water and Climate
- Water Resources Science

Courses offered vary from semester-to-semester and year-to-year; available options are provided to participants several months prior to the beginning of the semester.



Semester Study Program

MAST Course Offerings

Participants can also select courses designed only for MAST International trainees and interns. Qualified instructors teach these courses at a college level. These courses are offered according to student interest and may vary from semester to semester. Some options have limited enrollment.

English Language and Communication

This course focuses on grammar and vocabulary by studying cultural values such as family, work, money, and politics. Students learn to prepare a resume and learn job-interviewing skills.

Farm and Business Management

This course is designed for both agricultural and horticultural students. Topics covered include farm and business management, marketing, business and financial records, farm financial decision-making, business plans, U.S. government farm programs, information management, risk and control issues, and international agriculture.

Artificial Insemination

This course offers techniques of artificial insemination (A.I.). Classroom topics include anatomy of the cow, heat detection, physiology of the estrus cycle, semen tanks and semen handling, genetics, and sire selection. Limited hands-on cow practice is offered based on availability. Other hands-on techniques may include semen handling, thawing, and reproductive tract practice. Students who successfully complete the course will receive a course certificate from GENEX/CRI, but will not be certified to perform A.I.



Special Notes

- The study program **MUST** be selected at the time of application; it cannot be added after the visa is obtained.
- MAST International and the participant's host trainer must approve changes to the training/ internship and/or semester study program dates.
- Approved changes to the training/ internship or semester study program are subject to an administrative fee.



*P*rogram Costs

What do
I have to pay
upon arrival?

What do I pay
later?

Travel Expenses

Participants are responsible for the cost of travel to Minnesota and for their return trip home. Some participants will also need to pay for transportation to the placement site following the orientation (host trainers will reimburse up to \$100 of this cost.)

Training/Internship Fee

Training/Internship fee is based on the length of practical experience:

1 to 4 months	\$600
5 months	\$700
6 months	\$800
7 months	\$900
8 months	\$1,000
9 months	\$1,100
10 to 12 months	\$1,200
13 to 18 months*	\$1,500

*Management trainees only.

\$600 due upon arrival

These fees cover the administrative costs for the training or internship program, orientation, informational materials, and program maintenance. These fees are non-refundable.

Semester Study Program Fee

\$1,550 (due before semester begins)

This fee covers all administration, program maintenance, and tuition for the Semester Study Program. Additional fees may be charged for laboratory or field courses. Participants enrolling for the Semester Study Program are billed during the Training/Internship Program.

Other Expenses

(Not applicable for all participants)

- Work clothes/boots
- Car
- Car insurance
- Recreational and cultural activities
- Vacations
- Semester Study Program
 - Travel
 - Housing and food costs
 - Books and supplies

Insurance Premium and Filing Fee

Approximately \$85 per month due upon arrival.

By law, health and medical insurance is required for all J-1 exchange visitors in the United States. All participants are required to maintain medical coverage for illness and injury that meets or exceeds federal guidelines. The MAST International program provides an approved policy at a rate of approximately \$85 per month. Participants are expected to pay the cost of insurance for the entire length of program upon arrival at the orientation. The monthly payment, is refundable when a trainee or intern officially ends the program early.

Trainees or interns arriving with insurance coverage meeting the U.S. State Department guidelines listed below are not required to purchase insurance coverage through the MAST International program. Proof of this coverage is required at the orientation and must be written in English and quoted in U.S. dollars.

- Medical and Accident Expenses: \$50,000 per illness/accident
- Emergency Evacuation: \$10,000
- Repatriation of Remains: \$7,500
- Deductible per Injury: Not to exceed \$500
- Co-payment: Not to exceed 20%

Note: These guidelines are subject to change. Participants should verify requirements prior to purchasing insurance in their home country.

Getting Ready

Notification of Acceptance

Once selected to be a MAST International trainee or intern, the visa documents, training plans, and program materials are sent to the MAST International Partner, who forwards them to the participant.

Things to do Before Arrival in the U.S.

- **Visit the U.S. Consulate to obtain an entry visa** – instructions on this process are included with the documents sent upon acceptance to the program.
- **Arrange travel to the U.S.** – once the entry visa has been obtained, purchase an airline ticket to arrive on time for the orientation in Minnesota.
- **Obtain an International Driver's Permit (IDP)** – it is much easier to drive in the U.S. with the IDP; without it, participants often have to pay for a translation of the home country driver's license or wait several months to drive.
- **See your health care providers** – most travel insurance policies do not cover dental, eye, or medications, and medical care in the U.S. can be very expensive, so visit your doctor before you travel.

Orientation

Upon arrival, a mandatory orientation is held at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, Minnesota. The orientation discusses practical training, program policies, safety, and cultural adjustment. After officially enrolling and completing the orientation program, the training/internship begins.



I mportant Facts

DATES TO KNOW

	Arrival Dates in Minnesota (Saturday or Sunday)	Orientation Dates (Monday and Tuesday)	Training/Internship Start Date (Thursday)
January	January 24 - 25, 2015	January 26 - 27, 2015	January 29, 2015
February	February 21 - 22, 2015	February 23 - 24, 2015	February 26, 2015
March	March 21 - 22, 2015	March 23 - 24, 2015	March 26, 2015
April	April 11 - 12, 2015	April 13 - 14, 2015	April 16, 2015
May	May 2 - 3, 2015	May 4 - 5, 2015	May 7, 2015
August	August 8 - 9, 2015	August 10 - 12, 2015	August 13, 2015
September	September 12 - 13, 2015	September 14 - 15, 2015	September 17, 2015
October	October 10 - 11, 2015	October 12 - 13, 2015	October 15, 2015
November	November 7 - 8, 2015	November 9 - 10, 2015	November 12, 2015

If your training starts in June or July, you will go direct to your placement site and come to Minnesota for the August orientation.

MAST INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI



Since 1949, MAST International has sponsored training for young adults from over 80 countries, including the following:

Argentina	Estonia	Latvia	Rwanda
Australia	Finland	Lithuania	South Africa
Austria	France	Moldova	Sweden
Belarus	Georgia	Morocco	Switzerland
Brazil	Germany	Netherlands	Tanzania
Bulgaria	Ghana	New Zealand	Turkey
China	Honduras	Norway	Ukraine
Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	United Kingdom
Denmark	India	Romania	Uruguay
Ecuador	Japan	Russia	Uzbekistan

Where are
MAST Alumni
located?

*H*ow to Apply to the Program

1. Read the MAST International Program Information thoroughly.
2. If you meet the program qualifications, complete an application. NOTE: The study program must be selected at the time of application; it cannot be added after the visa is obtained.
3. Return the following to the MAST International Partner in your country:
 - a. Application Form
 - b. Copy of your Passport Information page
 - c. Your Autobiography (on a separate piece of paper)
 - d. Health and Medical History Questionnaire
 - e. 2 Reference Forms
 - f. 1 Current Photo, if available
 - g. Optional: Other documents, such as a curriculum vitae or resume, a copy of a diploma, certificate or degree, photos, or other information that would add to your application (no more than 5 pages and 4 photos)

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

1. The MAST International Partner in your country assesses your qualifications and conducts an interview.
2. If acceptable and complete, your application is sent to MAST International, preferably 3 or more months prior to your chosen start date.
3. MAST International staff members evaluate your application.
4. If qualified, MAST International then attempts to match you with a host trainer.
5. Host trainers review applications to select which trainee/intern they wish to host.
6. If you are selected, a letter of placement with your Training/Internship Placement Plan and documents to apply for your U.S. visa are sent to the MAST International Partner in your country.
7. If you accept your placement, you must visit the U.S. Consulate in your country to obtain an entry visa to the United States.
8. After you receive your entry visa, schedule a flight to arrive for the orientation dates indicated on your placement information. Either you or the MAST International Partner should send your travel details to MAST International at least 20 days prior to your arrival.

What's next?

How do I apply?

MAST International

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