

LABO INTERN PROGRAM

“A Journey of a Thousand Miles Must Begin with a Single Step”

The Labo Intern Program is not a formal study-abroad program, but is truly a “Learning by Doing” experience. Sponsored by the Labo International Exchange Foundation, Interns spend 12 months working for Labo throughout Japan and living with Japanese families. The program also includes:

- Two months in Tokyo studying the Japanese language and culture
- 4-6 month-long intervals of “Caravan” travel and work in more rural areas of Japan
- Participation in Labo’s Winter and Summer Camps
- Completion of a formal independent study project

Living with Japanese families, working for a Japanese company, and pursuing an independent study project allow Interns to gain an excellent insight into modern Japanese society and Japanese business. Other benefits include: learning the Japanese language, improving cross-cultural communications skills, developing the ability to more objectively examine one’s own values and cultural background, and the opportunity for great personal and professional growth.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who have a strong interest in Japan are eligible to apply. Applicants must be 18 at the time of application. Previous travel to Japan is recommended but not required. Knowledge of the Japanese language is not required, but applicants must be willing to study Japanese.

INTERN DUTIES

Following are examples of the variety of work expected of Interns:

1. **Labo Club Visits:** Interns spend a good deal of time visiting Labo Party Clubs -- taking part in Songbirds, Theme Activities, and games with Labo members. Interns are sometimes asked to plan a portion of the meeting -- explaining about life in their home country, teaching a game or song, or giving a short English lesson. Interns may also be asked to attend district meetings and presentations. ***Creativity and the ability to work with children are important.***
2. **Office Work:** Interns perform a variety of office tasks such as data entry, copying, stapling, and stuffing envelopes. They are also utilized as English resource persons and if needed, help write camp handbooks and orientation materials, prepare presentations, and assist with other English language projects. ***A good knowledge of the English language is essential.***
3. **Exchange Program:** Interns assist with orientation meetings for Labo members going overseas. They also assist with the In-Japan exchange for foreign exchangees -- meeting them at the airport, conducting orientations, planning Host Family Introduction Ceremonies, working at Camp, and serving as counselors for the foreign students during the exchange.
4. **Labo Camp:** Interns help with Labo’s Winter and Summer Camps. During Camp, Interns assist with the foreign students -- helping them join in Camp activities, translating schedules and rules, etc. Interns may also be asked to give presentations about the exchange programs.

5 . **College Mate and Senior Mate meetings:** Labo university ('College Mates'), and high school ('Senior Mates') students have their own meetings which often involve English-language activities such as debates, writing and performing plays, and playing language games. Interns are eagerly asked to join in these meetings, which are a great place to make new friends.

6. **Independent Study Project:** Interns will be required to pursue an independent study project while in Japan. A proposal of study is required as a part of the application process. This is explained in more detail on the following page.

7 . **Other:** Interns will attend meetings with Labo Tutors and parents of Labo members. They are anxious to learn about all aspects of life in the Intern's home country, new educational ideas and developments, and Labo's international exchange opportunities.

Interns are able to travel throughout Japan, learn about the diversity of lifestyles and values in Japan, and meet a wide variety of people. Every day is a new adventure, and close and long-lasting friendships develop quickly.

“Whoever I am or whatever I am doing, some kind of excellence is within my reach.”

Overview of a typical year's schedule

North America Interns fly to Japan in early September and return to North America the following August.

September	All interns stay in the Tokyo area and attend Japanese language classes. There are also orientation sessions about the Labo philosophy and organization as well as introductions to aspects of Japanese culture such as a museum visit, calligraphy, and the tea ceremony.
October	Interns are assigned to district offices. They make many Labo Party visits, assist in the office,
November	and attend College Mate and Senior Mate meetings for Winter Camp planning.
December	Assist with the Australia and New Zealand exchange: arrival orientation, travel to host January families, exchange activities, and departure. Winter Camp is held in late December. Interns also help evaluate Japanese students who are applying to go to North America for a year of study.

Oceania Interns fly to Japan in early February and return to Oceania the following February.

February	All Interns stay in the Tokyo area and attend Japanese classes. There are also orientation sessions about the Labo philosophy and organization as well as introductions to aspects of Japanese culture such as making udon, calligraphy, and the tea ceremony.
March/April	These months are when Labo recruits new members, and Interns help promote Labo and explain about Labo's exchange opportunities. Interns may travel extensively throughout more rural parts of Japan and participate in many Labo Party Clubs, meetings of Labo mothers, and orientations for Labo members going overseas.
May to August	Interns are assigned to district offices. There are Labo Party visits, District gatherings, and presentations for Labo members planning to travel abroad. Interns assist with the orientation and exchange activities for foreign students visiting Japan, and they also attend Summer Camp. In August, Interns return to Tokyo for an evaluation of their time in Japan.

WORK SCHEDULE

Interns are expected to work eight hours per day, five days per week. Each Intern's actual schedule will vary. When work is required on weekends or in the evenings, an equivalent amount of time may be taken off during the week.

VACATIONS: In addition to regular Labo holidays (most National Holidays, a week-long New Year break and another week in May for Golden Week), Interns are granted two weeks of vacation. Vacation time must be scheduled with the approval of Labo.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

In compliance with visa regulations, Interns are required to pursue an independent study project while in Japan. Labo will grant Interns eight hours (one working day) per week for this project, and will assist with making arrangements. Labo can also offer limited financial support for expenses related to the Independent Study Project.

The Independent Project must be about an aspect of "traditional Japanese culture". Labo is happy to work with Interns to develop a plan for their independent study. It is also suggested that applicants work with their university advisors to develop a project for which they can receive credit, as well as meeting Labo's requirements.

A detailed research proposal is required as is a final project/demonstration/report.

HOMESTAYS

Interns live with Labo families. Homestays last approximately one to two months. Host families vary in terms of lifestyle and interests, but each host family has a desire to open their homes to a young adult from another country -- to share languages, cultures, and ideas.

Using the Japanese language on a daily basis and participating in the daily life of the Japanese people provides Interns with a deeper understanding of modern Japan. Host family members are very helpful in teaching Japanese etiquette and proper use of the Japanese language for men and women. Many times there will be household members who don't speak any English, so Interns will have to use Japanese to communicate!

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Labo provides:

- A monthly stipend of ¥90,000 (after Japanese taxes have been deducted)
- Room and board with host families (except for lunch on work-days).
- Round-trip airfare from the Intern's home to Japan.
- All work-related travel expenses in Japan, including daily commuting passes, transportation, lodging, and meals during Labo trips.
- All costs related to obtaining a visa for the year (except the cost of a passport).
- Health Insurance

Interns are responsible for:

- Lunch on work-days.
- Obtaining a passport.
- Personal expenses such as clothing, books, postage, entertainment, etc.
- Expenses involved with their Independent Study Project.
- Deductibles not covered by their insurance policy.

HOW TO APPLY

Canada and US applications should be mailed directly to the Labo office in Tokyo. Australia applications should be mailed to Mitsui Travel in Australia. New Zealand applications should be sent to the Let's Homestay office in New Zealand. For an application packet, contact your Labo Exchange Coordinator. Or you can contact:

Labo International Exchange Foundation

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US and Canada applications must be received by December 20, for the program beginning the following September. Finalists will be interviewed in February, with final selection announcement to be made in March. Australia and New Zealand applications must be received by August 31, for the program beginning the following February. Finalists will be interviewed in September, with final selection announcement to be made in October.

“It is good to have an end to journey towards, but
it is the journey that matters, in the end.”