International Field Trip

Description (What)

RMIT Business offers a series of study tours that focus on a particular discipline and often include site visits to give students exposure to industry experts and an insight into international practices, enterprises and standards relating to that career or industry. They involve a combination of classroom face-to-face learning, site visits and cultural experiences. Students enrol in a specific course. Before they travel they attend workshops exploring cross-cultural issues. They then head overseas to study intensively; participate in assessment tasks; and complete additional requirements when they return to RMIT. Assessment tasks can include a group presentation, a business report, a reflective learning journal or an individual assignment.

Objectives (Why)

The objectives are to assist students to:

- Critically appreciate and evaluate the relationship between global and national business
- Use reflective practice techniques as part of ethical management strategy for globally networked organisations
- Work effectively as part of a global, multidisciplinary, collaborative team
- Make culturally sensitive business decisions within a diverse global environment
- Apply a critical appreciation of the relationship between global business and local business
- Use knowledge of the issues involved in global business with the various standards and practices commonly adopted by organisations undertaking global business practices through case study analysis, prescribed readings and reflective analysis of the issues at play
- Undertake and critically evaluate business globalisation practice in a global setting
- Work effectively within a team setting as a global business specialist with professional and project management skills (analytical and problem-solving skills, communication skills and leadership)
- Make decisions and problem solving in the classroom in relation to real-life case studies and industry scenarios presented by industry guest speakers
- Manage effective relationships while working in a team environment
- Recognise the need for and develop the ability to develop and implement internationally socially aware, responsible businesses that focus on the triple bottom line and sustainability
- Use skills in making an effective verbal presentation in a business setting

Practice (How)

The Industry Study Tour introduces participants to issues related to business globalisation within a specific context. For example, the China study tour is a collaboration between the Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade (SIFT), Fudan University and the RMIT College of Business. Students participate in activities and visits that help them understand how advances in transportation, technology and communication have dramatically increased the level of global interaction in China. They take historical and cultural tours of Shanghai, receive lectures by SIFT and Fudan University professors, go on site visits and have briefings by organisations such as General Motors â€“ Shanghai, Shanghai Stock Exchange, Austrade, BAO Steel and the Shanghai Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone. The European accounting study tour is a multi-country study tour that gives students the chance to gain insight into international business and accounting practices by meeting with key executives in manufacturing and regulatory bodies in Europe. It also provides a stimulus to students to appreciate the different social and cultural features of the European countries visited and develop interpersonal skills and confidence in public speaking and delivering presentations to host organisations. Host organisations include: London: International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), Tesco Ltd, J Sainsbury and Control Risks; Paris: Conseil National de la Comptabilité© (CNC); Berlin: Axel Springer and German Accounting Standards Board (DLSC); Munich: Siemens, BMW World; Wolfsburg: Volkswagen (Autostadt); Lausanne/Vevey: Nest.
Industry Engagement

Key to the success of International Study Tours is the input of interested and carefully selected industry partners who are briefed on the purpose of the course and the intended learning outcomes of site visits.

Enablers

- Enthusiastic staff with good international connections
- A good travel agent

Impediments

- Costs
- Convenient timing of visits for Australian students to northern hemisphere destinations may be in colder, more wintry times of year
- The view of some that study tours are ‘jaunts’, not serious academic activities

Evidence of Impact and Benefits

Students are able to make culturally sensitive business decisions within a diverse global environment and apply a critical appreciation of the relationship between global business and local business.

Unintended Outcomes

One student reported ‘I was overwhelmed by the depth and practical nature of this outstanding program. Meeting top executives at our host organisations and their courtesy and hospitality as well as the opportunity to travel to a number of European countries made this a lifetime opportunity not to be missed. I was also able to use my German language skills, and presenting in that language to our German hosts gave me a great sense of satisfaction’.

Good Practice Principles

- Pre-departure briefings and readings
- Carefully designed itinerary, including site visits, lectures, meetings with organisations, cultural activities
- Post-tour reports and reflection