

What is the South Africa Intern Program?

A select group of MBA students spends the months of June and July, in Cape Town, South Africa, working with internationally known Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to help them economically empower the people of South Africa. Interns share their business experience, education and skills with these organizations to help them better serve the people their organizations serve.

What do students do during their internship experience?

Notre Dame MBA Students live at the University of Cape Town's, Graduate School of Business campus where they interact with both students from all over Africa and individuals from the local community.

Interns work with a variety of organizations, which include Catholic Welfare and Development, Ikamva Labantu, the Parliamentary Liaison Office and the Amy Biehl Foundation. Past interns have created marketing strategies and financial models, implemented accounting systems, and improved operation strategies for both microbusinesses and non-governmental business support organizations. In addition to the learning about how businesses function in another country, students gain important insights about the effects of the country's former apartheid based government on all races and classes of people in South Africa. Interns will also work with local CEO mentors to better understand the challenges of business leadership in Southern Africa.

How can students benefit from participating in the South Africa Intern Program?

Students have the opportunity not only to develop their business skills, but also to immerse themselves in the Cape Town community and the South African culture. They have the unique opportunity to examine first hand the challenges presented to a country that has experienced dramatic political and social change. South Africa, after all, is one of the world's newest emerging democracies. This experience provides students with the chance to make a significant difference in the lives of the people with whom they live and work.

How do students apply for these internships?

Interested MBA students apply and are interviewed for the program in October and the six selected interns are announced in early November. During the spring semester the student interns participate in an eight-week course, entitled "Entrepreneurship in Developing Countries," in which they learn about the business, societal, and political culture of South Africa. They also receive their summer project responsibilities and have the opportunity to make contacts and begin work on their projects even before leaving for South Africa. Once students arrive in Cape Town in early June they are ready to move forward on their projects and make a significant impact on the assigned microbusinesses and organizations.

For more information regarding the South Africa Intern Program, please contact the Gigot Center at 219.631.3042.