

## **V.I.E Overview - What is the V.I.E Program?**

The *Volontariat International en Entreprises*, also known in the US as the *French International Postgraduate Internship Program*, was established to promote the international development of French companies while at the same time offering graduates and young professionals an opportunity to benefit from a formative experience abroad. This program, administered by UBIFRANCE (under the appointment of the French Ministry of Foreign Trade) and the French American Chamber of Commerce here in the US, permits French companies to send young candidates between the ages of 18 and 28 years of age on assignment abroad for a flexible period from 6 to a maximum of 24 months (based on a renewal once within the 24 month period\*). It is open to young French candidates of all educational backgrounds, who have fulfilled their national service obligations, as well as young people from the European Economic Area meeting the same conditions. The V.I.E is aimed towards (and appeals to) highly motivated young professionals, typically recent graduates who have some practical work background as well as current students seeking to broaden their academic and professional experience.

## **What types of assignments can V.I.Es do?**

The types of duties that V.I.E candidates can perform are extremely diverse and ultimately depend on a company's needs. As highly educated students and graduates, they have a broad set of qualifications according to their training and can carry out any task performed by recent US graduates. Typical projects include market research, financial analysis studies, technical support for local teams, marketing and public relations, administrative and sales assistance, just to name a few.

## **What companies can benefit from the V.I.E?**

Since the V.I.E Program is appointed by and administered through a division of the French Ministry of Foreign Trade, it is limited to French subsidiaries operating in the US or American companies in the US with an existing commercial agreement with a company in France.

## **What are the US regulations concerning V.I.E?**

V.I.E candidates coming to the US for this program fall under the J-1 visa category either under the "intern" or "trainee" designation. As per J-1 visa requirements, the V.I.E status is specific to training or internship programs only and cannot be used for "employment". The duration of the assignment is limited to 12 to 18 months (with one renewal permitted to a maximum of 24 months) according to the J-1 visa delivered to the candidate. J-1 Visas are "Non-immigrant" status and companies are generally not permitted to hire participants at the end of their visa stay in the US.

## **What is the V.I.E status?**

The V.I.E candidate has a "public status" and as such, he/she comes to the US under the protection of the French Embassy. There is no contractual link with the company in France benefiting from the assignment. The candidate receives a standard living allowance, paid by UBIFRANCE in Euros,

which is deposited into his/her bank account in France. The allowance is a fixed rate that varies according to the US city in which the assignment is carried out and is not subject to taxes in France. Medical insurance is arranged by contract for the sponsoring company by UBIFRANCE and does not require pension contributions during the assignment period under basic French national pension system requirements.

### **What is the cost of a V.I.E Intern/Trainee?**

While UBIFRANCE manages and administers the payment of the candidate's allowance and insurance for the duration of the visa period, the sponsor company in France is responsible for reimbursing these costs to the UBIFRANCE organization. V.I.E/J-1 visa holders are not considered part of a company's workforce and are paid through the candidate's French bank account (they must never be paid directly through the US hosting company). No taxes or pension payments are required or paid during this time.

The V.I.E program is not limited to large companies or multinational corporations - regional grants, intern sharing or other options may be available to small and medium size companies (SME/PME's) interested in taking advantage of this opportunity. Refer to the UBIFRANCE website for more information: <http://bit.ly/1MrJjpa>

*Note - for tax reasons, UBIFRANCE does not recommend that French companies bill the cost of the V.I.E to the US host company.*

The reimbursable costs of the program include:

- The V.I.E's monthly standard allowance: generally runs from €2,000 to €3,000 per month depending on the US city where the trainee will be located.
- Management fee and medical insurance for the candidate - average cost ranges from €175 to €375 per month, depending on the turnover and the number of V.I.E. candidates assigned to the French company at a given time.
- Airfare equivalent to one round-trip ticket from point of departure in France to final location in the US including standard luggage fees.
- Operating costs related to the assignment.
- The cost of the visa

An overview of estimate costs and a budgeting calculator can be found online at <http://bit.ly/1OCIL2p>

## How does the V.I.E program work in the U.S?

All administrative details and legalities of the V.I.E are handled by UBIFRANCE as administered by the French Ministry of Foreign Trade. The visa procedure is arranged and coordinated by the New York chapter of the *French-American Chamber of Commerce* which is authorized by the U.S. State Department to sponsor the J-1 visa for eligible interns and trainees. This arrangement allows companies to focus on business operations without the concern of recruitment, administrative or legal issues related to the program.

Lengths of assignments are based on the type of visa issued - generally between 6 to 18 months but may be extended once within the initial time-frame to a maximum of 24 months. The assignment must be continuous and is not transferable to a different host company.

Note: V.I.E/J-1 visa holders can spend up to 165 days per 12 month assignment in France while still benefiting from the same fiscal and social benefits as their status in the US. This time can be used to train the candidate before joining the local host company, coordinate with the headquarters in France during the assignment, or other projects necessary to the functioning of the training and business objective.

## Where can you find the right candidate to match your needs?

UBIFRANCE promotes the V.I.E through institutions of higher education (business & engineering schools, technical schools, universities, etc.) and youth career orientation centers throughout France and maintains a database of all candidates. More than 50,000 candidates with high-level profiles are currently registered and ready to meet specific demands. Companies can select resumes of candidates at <http://export.businessfrance.fr/>, or alternatively, they can post assignment offers directly on that website. Upon request, UBIFRANCE can also assist companies in the search and recruitment of detailed profiles.

## How do you apply for a V.I.E?

In the U.S:

For both the local subsidiary of French companies as well as US companies with a commercial agreement with a French company, the process is the same. The application for a V.I.E candidate must be submitted by the company in France directly to the UBIFRANCE organization (only the French office is authorized to contract with UBIFRANCE). The hosting company in the US will be in charge of the actual visa procedure in the states and will work directly with the New York chapter of the FACC.

In France: The company completes an approval request (*demande d'agrément*) as well as a volunteer assignment application form (found on the <http://bit.ly/1NSOVvA> website). Once approved, the authorization entitles the company to apply for an unlimited number of V.I.Es\*. Companies already approved can download their applications online through their V.I.E customer space on the website.

### **Contact in the U.S.**

To arrange a V.I.E intern/trainee in the US contact:

[infovieusa@ubifrance.fr](mailto:infovieusa@ubifrance.fr)

+1-212-400-2160