



**eInternships: A new EPA virtual  
internship program for students  
for the 2014-2015 school year  
***PILOT PROGRAM*****

Contact:

Daniel Haskell,

Point of Contact for EPA Virtual Internships

[haskell.daniel@epa.gov](mailto:haskell.daniel@epa.gov)

206-553-1587

# Introduction

- **The Virtual Student Foreign Service (VSFS) program is managed by the State Department's Office of eDiplomacy. As the largest virtual internship program for US college students in the federal government, the VSFS team at the State Department can provide a pathway for students to apply for and compete for virtual internships on USAjobs.gov that support EPA staff with their core work.**
- **The VSFS program understands establishing a virtual internship program takes significant time and resources. Thus, the VSFS team is now welcoming partnering projects from the Environmental Protection Agency for the 2014-2015 school year.**

# Benefits of an EPA Virtual intern

- No cost to the agency
  - no overhead costs for phone, desk space, computer.
  - eInternships are unpaid.
- The VSFS program is streamlined
  - No government computer/equipment required. No PC support set-up.
  - eInterns do not have security clearances to EPA servers
  - eInterns are not processed through traditional Human Resources outlets
- A MOU is not required (nor is it encouraged) between the State Department and the EPA
- Easily leverage enthusiastic collage students with a requested skill set.
  - Students compete for EPA Virtual Internships on USAjobs.gov.
  - Students can get a “preview” of upcoming EPA Virtual Internships on the state.gov website before the USAjobs.gov posting

中文



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
GUANGZHOU • CHINA

# VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP REAL EXPERIENCE



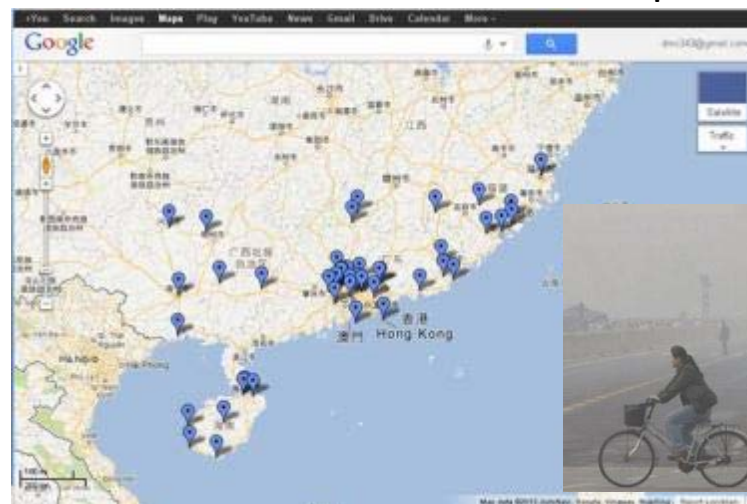
A Consulate in Asia had a student help build a digital map of environmental pollution in China. She sifted through numerous media sources to identify and document pollution events, including the local government's response to each incident.

VIRTUAL STUDENT FOREIGN SERVICE  
**V S F S**

MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE.  
[state.gov/vsfs](http://state.gov/vsfs)



**SHOWCASE:** In the fall of 2012 Consulate General Guangzhou successfully recruited a team of four U.S. college students through the Virtual Student Foreign Service (VSFS) program to conduct online research of pollution cases within the provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and Fujian. To date the team has created an online database of over 50 pollution related news stories and blog articles from a wide variety of sources highlighting the cost and extent of pollution in the consular district as well as any government or local responses. These sources have been paired with an additional database of equivalent size composed of news stories prepared by local Consulate staff related to pollution incidents.

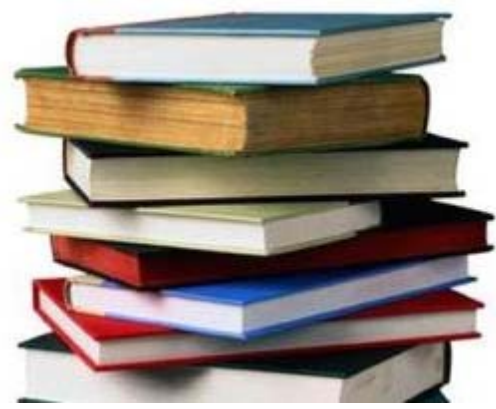




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June 9	June 9 Project Submission Deadline
July 1	July 1 Projects posted online VSFS website for students to view
July 2-22	July 2-22 VSFS open on USAJobs for students to apply
early August	Applications from qualified candidates forwarded to offices for consideration. Offices review applications, conduct interviews, request additional information, etc.
late August/early September	Offices select candidates for Virtual Student Foreign Service <b>(Selections are due September 9)</b>
September 10	Office of eDiplomacy sends official offers to selected students
September 10-17	Students accept/turn down offers. Applications from qualified candidates not selected are forwarded to offices with late project submissions
September 18	Students begin virtual internships
early December	Office of eDiplomacy conducts mid-year check-in with students and supervisors
April	Office of eDiplomacy conducts end-of-year evaluation with students and supervisors
May	(Most) Internships conclude. Supervisors evaluate eInterns.
June	Office of eDiplomacy sends out letters and certificates of recognition to all virtual interns that complete their internships.

# Responsibilities between The EPA and The VSFS team at the State Department

- **Project Proposal Submission**

- The EPA does internal outreach to employees to identify projects. Project Descriptions (PDs) are due June 9<sup>th</sup> 2014

- **Student/university/applicant outreach**

- The VSFS team provides the EPA with a set of VSFS marketing materials
- The VSFS team reaches out to potential applicants about VSFS in general
- The EPA reaches out to potential applicants through email, social media, etc.

- **Student Application**

- The VSFS team manages the entire process; including the USAjobs.gov posting that outlines the skill set desired

- **Selection Process**

- The VSFS team contacts supervisors directly to make selection and refer top candidates to them
- The EPA mentor or supervisor makes selection (interview, ect.)

- **During Internship**

- The VSFS team invites students to join closed online community
- The VSFS team gives guidance on the above strategy
- The VSFS team checks in with students and supervisors twice during the internship
- The EPA mentor or supervisor establishes communications strategy, guidelines, training, briefings, mentoring, ect.

- **Ending Internship**

- The VSFS team sends evaluation template to supervisors
- Supervisors send completed evaluation to student and VSFS team

- **Recognition**

- The VSFS team sends a certificate from Secretary Kerry and thank you letter from our office of eDiplomacy
- The EPA is welcome to create their own agency recognition



# FAQ

Q: Is there a maximum number of projects the VSFS team will sponsor for the EPA?

A: Not really, the VSFS team will work with Daniel Haskell based on their needs and resources.

Q: How does an eIntern with the EPA indicate participation on a resume?

A: Virtual Student Foreign Service (VSFS) eIntern with the EPA

Q: In the future, can the EPA set up their own virtual internship program?

A: Yes! The VSFS team can offer guidance and assistance to agencies who would like to set up their own virtual internship program

Q: The EPA does not have the resources to set up a virtual internship program at this time, can the EPA continue to use the VSFS team platform on the State Department website?

A: Sure!

Q: What are the eInterns work schedule and time commitment?

A: Scheduling is done between the EPA mentor or supervisor and the eIntern. On average the time commitment is 10 hours per week.

Q: How do the eInterns receive course-credit at their university for their work?

A: The burden of obtaining university credit for the VSFS program falls on the eIntern. The eIntern will need to coordinate with his or her university to obtain graduation credit.

Q: I am an EPA staff member who is interested in having an eIntern! What are the next steps?

A: Great! Daniel Haskell, [haskell.daniel@epa.gov](mailto:haskell.daniel@epa.gov), can provide you with a VSFS Supervisor handbook. A project description (PD) template will need to be filled out. PDs are due June 9<sup>th</sup> 2014.