

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR SASI PROJECT 2024-25

### **Q: Programming**

*We sent the list of projects to our Faculties to see if our students can get credits for the internships. Is the internship/project placement for the entire 8 weeks? Approximately how many hours will students work on the project per week?*

### **Ans. Internship Duration and Project Commitments:**

The internship lasts for eight weeks or 56 days. Although we don't have all the details about specific projects, each has different weekly tasks and hours. Roughly, the students will spend between 15 to 25 hours each week working on their projects, closely collaborating with their assigned host faculty.

### **Accumulated Work Hours and Flexibility:**

Students are expected to work around 135 to 200 hours during their internship, including time spent with faculty. The Indian host institutions are flexible to adjust work hours and activities to meet the credit requirements of the Canadian home institutions.

### **Credit-Worthy Projects and Collaboration:**

When students and their home institutions choose credit-worthy projects from the list, they should contact SICI. SICI will help them connect with host institutions to address specific needs, thereby streamlining the credit award process at the Canadian home institution. This teamwork will ensure a personalized student experience, making credit transfer and academic recognition more effective.

### **Q: Logistics**

#### ***Travel***

*All students travel together to India as a cohort with the SICI team. Will students have to book their own flights or how is the travel together managed? How does travel to different cities work then?*

### **Ans. Cohort Travel Coordination:**

To facilitate a seamless group travel experience, SICI will engage a dedicated travel agency to collaborate directly with students to manage all aspects of their international travel, including bookings and purchases. SICI will directly cover the costs incurred by the travel agency, ensuring a hassle-free process for students.

### **In-Country Assistance:**

SICI officials based in India and/or the designated travel agency will provide comprehensive support to students for their travel arrangements from Delhi to their respective host institutions.

**Q. Funding**

*How is the grant disbursed? E.g., lump sum to student before or after travel, specific sums based on expenses after submitting invoices, etc.?*

*What does "honorarium to host faculty" mean? Is this taken off the student grant? How much would that portion be?*

**Ans. Fund Distribution and Disbursement:**

The allocated budget for each student project is CAD\$8,500, with CAD\$4,500 earmarked for international air tickets, hotel accommodations and meals in Delhi, travel expenses from Delhi to host institutions, and an honorarium for the host institution. SICI will return any remaining funds to the home institutions following a thorough review of expenses and the submission of the final report by the interns. This will ensure a transparent and accountable utilization of resources for the benefit of the participating students and institutions.

Upon executing the Letter of Agreement, SICI will disburse the remaining CAD\$4,000 directly to the students' Canadian home institutions. Subsequently, the home institutions will release the amount to their student/s to cover visa expenses, comprehensive health care insurance, local transportation, cell phone charges, rent, and stipends for meals and incidentals.

**Honorarium for Host Faculty:**

Each host institution will designate faculty members, including supervisors and primary and secondary contacts. SICI will provide each institution with a CAD\$500 token honorarium as a gesture of appreciation. This honorarium acknowledges the valuable contribution of the host faculty in facilitating a rewarding experience for the participating students.

**Q. Accommodation**

*Do students book their own accommodation with your help or do you provide accommodation? What kind of accommodation is available (location, quality, etc)? Are there different options?*

**Ans. Student Accommodation:**

Canadian students in the SASI Project will stay in accommodations provided by Indian host institutions. These institutions have a successful history of hosting international students from Europe, the USA, and Canada. The on-campus accommodations adhere to high standards, ensuring a comfortable living environment. The commitment to quality reflects the host institutions' dedication to providing a welcoming residence for Canadian students during their internship engagement.

SICI's Canadian representatives will soon visit Indian host institutions to thoroughly assess the overall environment of the host institution facilities, covering aspects like accommodation, meals, campus life, workspace, labs, and amenities. The goal is to gain deep insights into every aspect of the campus, ensuring a comprehensive understanding. This hands-on assessment provides a positive experience for Canadian students, allowing us to proactively address and enhance every aspect of their stay and internship experience.

**Q. Risk**

*What is the security level of each area? Do the different destinations in India have different risk levels? Especially with gender-based crimes. Are there measures to mitigate it? Do you have any advice on how to address these questions? Would there be food or hygiene concerns?*

**Ans. Security and Safety Considerations:**

The environment at the host institutions prioritizes safety and security for all individuals, regardless of gender. The campus premises are meticulously monitored through extensive camera surveillance and stringent security measures.

However, in general, understanding the security levels across different areas is crucial, particularly concerning gender-based crimes. We acknowledge that these concerns may vary across destinations in India. To address this, there are robust measures in place to mitigate security risks. This includes the provision of 24\*7 helplines, dedicated police control room (PCR) vehicles, and accessible local police stations. These measures are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants.

For added safety, Indian host institutions will organize orientation workshops for interns. These workshops will offer practical guidance on navigating the local environment, highlighting essential do's and don'ts.

Additionally, a dedicated local WhatsApp group comprising Host Institution staff and interns will be established in all institutions. This ensures constant communication and immediate assistance in case of any unforeseen circumstances.

**Food and Hygiene Considerations:**

Regarding food and hygiene, the host institutions maintain high standards, and there are no critical hygiene issues to be concerned about. Nevertheless, as a precaution, interns are strongly advised to refrain from consuming open food or eatables from street vendors.

**Q. Visa**

*What is the visa process like? A general overview would help.*

**Ans.** At SICI, we strongly partner with the Indian High Commission and Consulate General's Offices in Canada, ensuring a smooth process for our scholars. Obtaining a student visa is a vital part of the SASI internship requirements, and SICI is dedicated to guiding and assisting interns throughout the visa application process. Our close relationship with relevant authorities will enable us to provide comprehensive support, ensuring a prompt and hassle-free visa acquisition process for all SASI Interns.

**Q. Process**

*Is your selection on a first-come-first-served basis?*

**Ans.** No, our selection process relies on adjudication. Once we receive applications by the deadline (15 March), an external adjudication committee will meticulously review and assess each application.

**Q.** *We prefer to have students apply internally first and then send you our nominees. Our internal application for summer opportunities is 1 March. We are planning to send you the list of nominees and their application documents as a whole in the week of 11 March. Does that work for you?*

**Ans.** Yes, receiving applications and nominees etc. in the week of 11 March work for us.

**Optimizing Participation in the Competition:**

Setting an internal deadline for interested students in participating institutions is crucial for aligning with the competition's timeline. If possible, we strongly recommend that Canadian home institutions consider adopting an internal deadline 1-2 weeks before SICI's official deadline. This strategic approach will ensure all necessary documents are ready well in advance, reducing the likelihood of last-minute challenges or disruptions.

**Mitigating Dropouts and Enhancing Utilization:**

Some Canadian academic institutions collect a mandatory deposit (usually \$200-250) from the students for outbound internship projects. This proactive step helps discourage last-minute dropouts, preventing vacant seats that other deserving applicants could fill. The deposit is refundable upon successful completion of the internship, but it is retained by the institution if a student drops out. We encourage other Canadian home institutions to consider adopting similar practices to make the most of available opportunities and reduce disruptions in the selection process.

**Q.** *What happens after 25 March/selection decisions? What are the further steps?*

**Ans. Post-Selection Process Timeline (End of March - End of June 2024):**

**Formal Notifications:**

SICI will send formal email notifications to the successful interns and their respective institutions.

**Acceptance and Quadripartite Letter of Agreement (LoA):**

Upon confirmation of accepting the award, SICI will send a quadripartite Letter of Agreement (LoA) to the students and their institutions.

**Connecting with Host Institutions:**

SICI will connect the interns and their designated host institutions.

**Visa Application Guidance:**

SICI will provide guidance to interns in applying for appropriate visas.

**Travel Arrangements:**

The SICI-designated travel agency will collaborate with interns to book international air tickets.

**Online Group meeting:**

SICI coordinates a virtual meeting to introduce all interns and advise on their travel preparations.

**Cohort Arrival in Delhi:**

At the end of June 2024, the interns and the SICI team will travel to Delhi, India, as a cohort.

**In-person Orientation in the SICI Delhi Office**

Interns will receive an in-person orientation in SICI's Delhi Office.

**Visit to the Canadian High Commission:**

Interns will visit the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi.

**Travel to Host Institutions:**

Interns will subsequently travel to their respective host institutions, where the host institution's representatives will warmly receive them.

**Q.** *Many of the first-year students may not have the education, knowledge, or experience that the internships require, whereas the second-year students likely would. Would there be potential for non-returning students to be accepted if we had them agree to come back to participate in some promotional activities and present on their experience both to faculty and students?*

**Ans.** Our primary preference is for second-year students returning to the campus after the internship. However, considering the concern raised above, if we do not receive a sufficient number of applications from the desired students, we are open to accepting non-returning students under the condition that they commit to fulfilling project duties, reporting requirements, and active participation in promotional activities for their fellow students and faculty members.

**Q:** *Would students who are completing their studies with us but transferring on to universities (an university in Alberta) count as a 'returning student'?*

**Ans:** Yes, students planning to transfer to an eligible University in Alberta upon completing their studies at an eligible college are considered 'returning students' and are eligible to apply for the internship program.