

Postcards from Placement-The Disney Cultural Exchange Program

by Michael Harvey

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THE DISNEY CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Postcards from Placement



Source- Cardiff University



Source-Orlando Weekly



Source-Daily Post



Source-Screenrant.com



A BRIEF OVERVIEW

- Based at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, the Cultural Exchange Program is a modern placement like no other. As observed by Disney Jobs (2019), the role is a learning based placement designed to work in conjunction with a higher education course. During the program, candidates will learn from ‘the most talented entertainment and guest service professionals in the industry’ according to Disney Jobs (2019).
- A key element of this placement is the emphasis on learning about cultures. People from all over the world visit Walt Disney World Resort and it is one the USA’s most important tourist destinations. Additionally, a candidate will be working alongside employees from different countries and Disney is also the perfect organisation to learn about workplace culture.

REQUIREMENTS

- As Observed by Disney Jobs (2019) 
- Must be living in the United Kingdom (among a number of other countries).
- Fluency in English is necessary as it the official language of the United States. 
- Aged 18 or over
- Must be a student at university as the course is tailored towards students
- Studying tourism is not essential as Disney has so many different roles and the whole experience is based around teaching candidates the hallmarks of exceptional guest service.



Source- Disney World  4

THE LOCATION

- The Disney Cultural Exchange Program is based at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida.
- According to Virgin Holidays (2019), the destination has a wide variety of resorts, including themed hotels such as the *Lion King* inspired Animal Kingdom lodge and the swashbuckling Caribbean Beach Resort. Disney has always been at the forefront of innovative residences, especially in their Florida park.
- The attractions are where memories are made. Guests can cool down at Blizzard Beach water park or go thrill seeking at Thunder Mountain or the Hollywood Tower. The possibilities for enjoyment at Disney are endless.



BENEFITS

- The benefits of this placement are far reaching and they are the reason we decided to investigate this particular placement in the first place.
- The social aspect. As with any job, socialisation is part and parcel of a working life. Instead of seeing this as burden, Disney attempts to foster better relations with their staff and candidates are expected to forge lifelong friendships. This would be a very rewarding experience and help us make connections within the industry.
- The exclusive staff residence. While participating in the placement, candidates stay in accommodation provided by Disney. This eases the burden of transportation costs as well as the task of finding housing in Orlando itself, which is quite a large area.
- The wide variety of roles on offer. The Disney Cultural Exchange Program has flexible approach when it comes to choosing the right job. As observed by Disney Jobs (2019), you can be a lifeguard, work in house keeping, a waiter/waitress, park cleaner and retail supervisor. If you want to take your appreciation of Disney to the next level, you can even be a character performer and make thousands of guests feel magical and excited.



DRAWBACKS

While this placement does have many good points, there are some negative aspects which need to be addressed.

Researching this project was difficult as most of the sources came from Disney itself. This means there could be a small amount of bias in how Disney describes the placement. If we were seriously considering moving out to Florida, we may need to seek out past candidates who could advise and give us some clarity.

There is a possibility of culture shock. Disney is known for being a fast-paced company and a candidate might not be ready for the incredibly high standards which Disney expects from its staff.

As the placement is located in the United States, there is little chance of being able to visit the attraction beforehand, unlike some placements based in the UK

Due to the current political climate and strict immigration controls, a candidate may not be able to secure a visa.



CONCLUSION

- Overall, the Disney Cultural Exchange Program is the kind of placement which will be remembered forever. Whether you are looking to discover the United States as a whole, explore Disney's enviable career progression opportunities or just want to find some experience within the industry, then this placement is perfect for you.
- Thank you for listening. Any questions?

REFERENCE LIST

Disney Jobs (2019) *Cultural Exchange Program* <https://jobs.disneycareers.com/cultural-exchange-program> (Accessed 25th November 2019)

Virgin Holidays (2019) *Holiday magic at Walt Disney World Resort* <https://www.virginholidays.co.uk/destinations/florida/orlando/walt-disney-world-holidays> (Accessed 25th November 2019)

Sources for Images

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/529385-ma-alumnus-returns-for-research-talk>

<https://www.orlandoweekly.com/Blogs/archives/2016/11/22/disney-confirms-major-transformation-at-epcot-and-rumors-are-flying>

<https://screenrant.com/disney-logo-things-didnt-know/>

https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/en_GB/

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GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

86/100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

Engagement with Literature

Evidence of research having been undertaken, and appropriate citations and citation methods are included in the slides to support the points put forward

Mostly appropriate methods applied within the reference list. However, for website sources you need to include [Online] within the reference details i.e.

Sparrow, M. (2017) 'Merkel raises hopes of Brexit talks being able to move on to trade in December' [Online]
Available: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/live/2017/oct/19/uk-should-give-up-hope-of-trade-deal-with-eu-tory-grandeers-tell-may-politics-live>, Accessed 2017, October, 19th

The images in this presentation did not need citing or listing. However, for future reference, you would reference the source of your images using Harvard.

There were some good points raised regarding the limitations related to the research, and the validity and reliability of the sources. Well done.

22/25

Knowledge and Understanding

Evidence of knowledge and understanding of Walt Disney World, its history and the employment opportunities, the drawbacks of working at the Park/organisation. You also spoke about the learning opportunities. **20/25**

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

Not applicable

Practical Application

Some good analysis of the benefits of the roles at Disney, and how the organisation fosters their employees and support networking. You introduced all of the different roles available for employees and from a placement perspective. You also spoke about the different attractions at Disney. Interesting discussion on the drawbacks of working at Disney, which could have been developed further. However, as suggested, the availability of information was limited. Well done. **19/25**

Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice

PowerPoint used to display the presentation. Good use of images and graphics to support the presentation.

Michael spoke very clearly and confidently.

You all worked well as a group and each person knew when it was their turn to present and stood appropriately while waiting their turn. **20/25**

A good conclusion. Well done.



Comment 1

You don't need to cite the sources of graphics in your presentation. However, for future reference, you would cite the sources of graphs, charts etc.



Comment 2

It is not likely that Disney would observe themselves. Use another word such as 'stated' for example



Comment 3

English and Spanish are the official languages of the USA



Comment 4

you don't need to cite the sources of images in a presentation. However, for future reference, you would cite the sources of graphs, charts etc.



Comment 5

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Comment 6

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