



Cooperative Education Report

International Education Consultancy Services at NIEC

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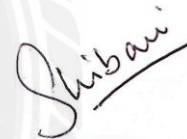
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We have approved this cooperative report as a partial fulfillment of the cooperative education program semester 2/2022

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Abstract

NIEC is an international education consultancy that has university partners all over the world including USA, Australia, UK, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland. NIEC also offers courses for international standardization tests and language tests such as SAT, GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, IELTS, and PTE.

This report studies the overall structure and functioning of NIEC and its overall marketing strategy that the company is developing its brand in the education consultancy industry. With a goal to enhance and benefit the students applying for international degrees this cooperative report is entitled “International Education Consultancy Services at NIEC”. This report studies an overall insight regarding how an international education consultancy works.

This study also analyzed an in-depth report from a perspective of the writer’s experience as an academic intern whose responsibilities included but were not limited to, filling application and VISA forms, documentation, attestation, booking test dates and scanning documents.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to Kathmandu College of Management and Siam University for providing us with this opportunity to work in a real-world setting before joining a firm. This has not only helped me obtain real-world experience, but it has also set me on a route to be able to work in fields that interest me and pick the best career path for me.

I would also like to extend my thanks to my supervisor, Counselor (Australia), Ms. Gita Tuladhar, CEO, Mrs. Sapana Rajbhandari, and Regional Manager, Ms. Shibani Shrestha, for welcoming me into the organization and allowing me to work alongside them at the same level as other workers. Their regular supervision and undivided attention helped me in learning the job in a pleasant working atmosphere. I am also appreciative to all the staff members for welcoming me and being so accommodating.

Being a part of the internship program at KCM and Siam has undoubtedly helped me in my professional development. The most valuable aspect of these internships was the opportunity to form connections and relationships with a wide range of individuals with diverse perspectives, for which I am grateful to the university's efforts in supporting me during my undergraduate career.

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Contents

Chapter 1	6
Introduction	7
Company Profile	7
Mission and Vision of the Company	8
Objective of the company	8
SWOT Analysis:	9
Organization Structure	10
Product and Services	11
Chapter 2	14
Job Description and Responsibilities	14
Chapter 3	17
Problems faced during internship	17
Recommendation to the company	18
Learning during the Co-Op studies	19
Chapter 4	21
Conclusion	21
Self-assessment of work experience	21
Limitation	22
Reference	22

Figure

Figure 1 Organization Structure of NIEC depicting staff and their positions at the company

List of Abbreviation

NIEC	:	Nepal International Education Consultancy
SAT	:	Scholastic Assessment Test
PTE	:	Pearson Test of English
TOEFL	:	Test of English as a Foreign Language
GRE	:	Graduate Record Examination
GMAT	:	Graduate Management Admission Test
IELTS	:	International English Language Testing System
SEVIS	:	Student and Exchange Visitor Information System
I20	:	Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status
DS160	:	Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application
CGI	:	Consultants to Government and Industry
VISA	:	Visitor International Stay Admission
NOC	:	No Objection Certificate
MOU	:	Memorandum of Understanding

Chapter 1

Introduction

Company Profile

Nepal International Educational Consultancy is a rapidly expanding and well-established educational consulting firm based in Nepal. NIEC offers its students comprehensive mentoring and support for foreign admissions and visa application processing. NIEC is an authorized representative for student admissions to many prestigious universities and colleges in countries such as the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland. Individual students applying for international degrees can benefit from NIEC's professional and standard consulting services. NIEC provides high-quality mentoring and training to our students, as well as assistance with higher education-related tasks such as course and institution selection, visa processing, enrollment, and transitioning them to international exposure.

In January 2001, NIEC was registered under His Majesty's Government's Companies Act. NIEC is a registered and licensed education consulting firm. The client's best interests are always a priority at NIEC, so services are guided by NIEC's values and professional ethics.

Mr. Suraj Rajbhandari, the company's Chairman, has dedicated his efforts to making higher international education more accessible and affordable to Nepali students.

NIEC's primary function is to provide standardized test preparation for TOEFL, IELTS, PTE, SAT 1, GRE, and GMAT, as well as to provide counseling and consulting services. This company is already well-established and one of the first and best educational consultancies in Nepal. They intend to expand worldwide.

Corporate Profile of Nepal International Educational Consultancy (NIEC)

Organization Name	Nepal International Educational Consultancy (NIEC)
Chairman	Suraj Rajbhandari
Organization Type	Education Consulting Firm
Operating Branches	Putalisadak, Maharajgunj, Pokhara, Butwal, Biratnagar, and Chitwan
Head Office	Sharemarket Complex 4 th Floor Putalisadak, Kathmandu Phone: +977 01 4256600
Website	https://www.niec.edu.np/

Mission and Vision of the Company

Mission: After the students have completed their final exams at numerous local testing facilities in Kathmandu, NIEC advises prospective students on higher education opportunities in other countries. It is tough for a Nepali student to choose the correct institution and university, but highly trained counselors give all the required information about colleges and universities, as well as the lengthy processing method for student visa applications at various embassies.

Before being delegated to give any information about colleges or institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, or Canada, NIEC's student counselors go through extensive training.

Vision: To bring about the best possible outcome for each individual who chooses to obtain our services as well as contribute to society at large by establishing the best standards possible in all our endeavors.

Objective of the company

- NIEC as an organization must be effective in establishing and sustaining long-term relationships with a wide range of colleges and universities.
- Providing professional counseling and educational support to prospective university and college students studying abroad.
- It aims to give excellent advice and help to all aspirants, starting with the selection of a university and academic program and continuing until the students have established themselves in the nation of their choice.
- Academicians' institutions, managed by highly qualified and acclaimed academicians, have moved forward to assist their valued students in choosing the right college or university for their Undergraduate, Graduate, Master's, Doctoral, or professional studies in the faculties of their interests, considering various factors such as fees and affordability, climate, academics, offering, and so on.
- Completely dedicated to achieving its goals through fair and productive practices.
- Providing advice to students and their parents about studying abroad.
- Searching for colleges and institutions that meet the needs of students.

- The organization is governed and promoted by them.
- Assisting candidates in achieving their goals

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths

- Branches in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Butwal, Biratnagar, and Chitwan provide standardized quality services and improved expertise of the consultant sector.
- A variety of student plans and packages (Most packages include your chosen exam preparation course as well as processing services for your study abroad destination.)
- Some colleges do not charge a processing fee.
- Counselors who have had extensive training

Opportunities

- International market expansion
- The demand for international higher education is increasing every day, leading students to select NIEC.

Weakness

- Strong marketing
- High competition
- No international branches

Threats

- Increasing competitors
- Only limited county counseling

Organization Structure

NIEC has a flat hierarchical command structure. The CEO, Education Counselor, Academic Department, Marketing and IT Department, Accountant, Front Desk Officer, and Language Instructor (IELTS, SAT, PTE, etc.) make up the company. Currently, the company employs only 30 people. The following is the organizational structure:

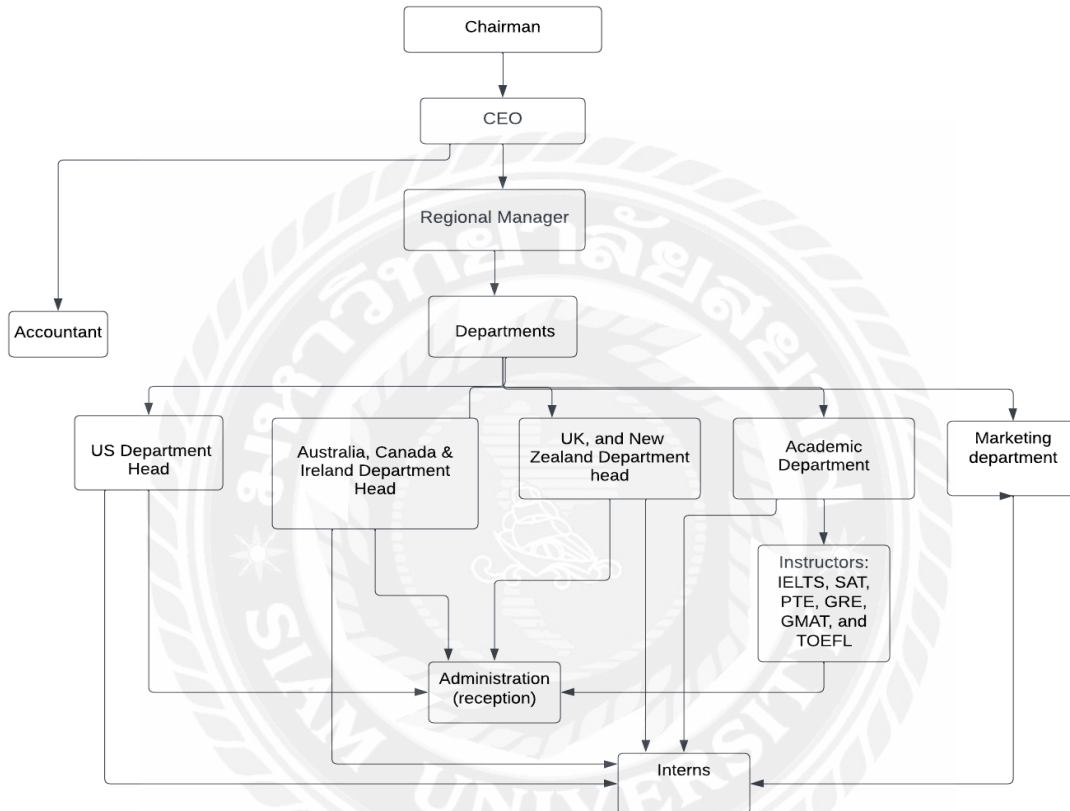


Figure 1. Organization Structure

Mrs. Sapana Rajbhandari, the Chief Executive Officer, supervises everything from recruiting, selecting, orienting, training, coaching, and punishing personnel to improve their effectiveness. On behalf of the organization, the CEO oversees signing business agreements, contracts, and paperwork. She oversees developing and implementing the company's purpose, vision, and overall strategy. When necessary, she also gives advice on the United Kingdom and Australia.

The regional manager, Ms. Shibani Shrestha, represents NIEC in several countries. She promotes the organization to options for partnership with several institutions. She oversees the firm's proposals, contracts, and new-country partnerships. She also offers guidance and interview preparation for universities in the United States, as well as US visas, when needed.

At NIEC, there are roughly seven counselors, two of whom assist with English proficiency exams such as the IELTS, PTE, GMAT, GRE, SAT, and TOEFL. They offer basic guidance on class schedules, courses during the week, class fees, benefits, the score that students must get to advance to a higher intended level degree, and the materials that we supply for test preparation, among other things.

The remaining five counselors oversee nations and universities. The United States has two counselors, whereas Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom each have three. They provide real students advice on how to enroll in overseas colleges while adhering to the GTE regulations. Counselors help students select the best country, subject, and university for them depending on their educational background and financial situation. Counselors also assist students with application preparation and submission, as well as other paperwork-related chores, and connect with colleges.

Academic requirements are overseen by the academic department. They must coordinate the schedules of both the students and the teacher. They oversee the exam preparation schedule, as well as the test results and the students' classes.

NIEC's marketing section seeks new customers and prospects, conducts market research, and surveys, and promotes the company at expos. Helps in the growth and sale of the company, as well as the documentation of all client information.

NIEC's accountant is based in the Putalisadak headquarters. The accountant is responsible for the preparation of financial reports, budgets, and statements, as well as financial forecasts and risk analysis.

The front desk officer greets students/clients in person and over the phone and ensures that the clients receive the highest degree of individualized customer service.

NIEC instructors are highly skilled and well-known for their ability to teach IELTS, PTE, SAT, and other courses. The teachers created the materials for the IELTS, PTE, SAT, and other courses, designed tactics, tips, and techniques for test preparation, and taught lessons both in-person and online.

Product and Services

Collaboration Services to Institutions: NIEC acts as a link between students and universities. They serve as agents for students, coaching them and negotiating agreements between colleges. They earn a commission from the university for referring the student to their university. Therefore, a positive connection between the institution and the organization is crucial.

Course Selection: NIEC's most important task is course selection. Counselors inform students about the many courses offered by colleges and the opportunities open to them in the desired countries.

Educational Counseling: NIEC's role entails advising students on what is the best option for studying abroad and encouraging them to use government resources to attain their goals. The company aims to instill a positive attitude in students so that they can study abroad.

Offers & Admissions in Universities / Colleges: NIEC offers an offer letter as well as an invoice for each university price structure to help students meet their financial obligations. There are low-cost universities as well as high-cost ones. The university will be chosen based on the requirements of the student.

Scholarship Assistance: NIEC assists students in obtaining scholarships by advising them on how to get exceptional academic results as well as strong performance in their language proficiency programs. It advises on how to set up a scholarship program following university norms and regulations.

University Selection: NIEC plays an essential role in assisting students with university choices, they assist them in providing critical counsel by displaying a future prospectus based on an analysis of their prior academic performance. It assists students in navigating the university's website and obtaining appropriate information about the university.

Visa Assistance: NIEC plays an essential role in assisting students with visa applications. They assist students by arranging pre-interview sessions and advising them on how to prepare for embassy visa interviews.

The author's intention to join the company:

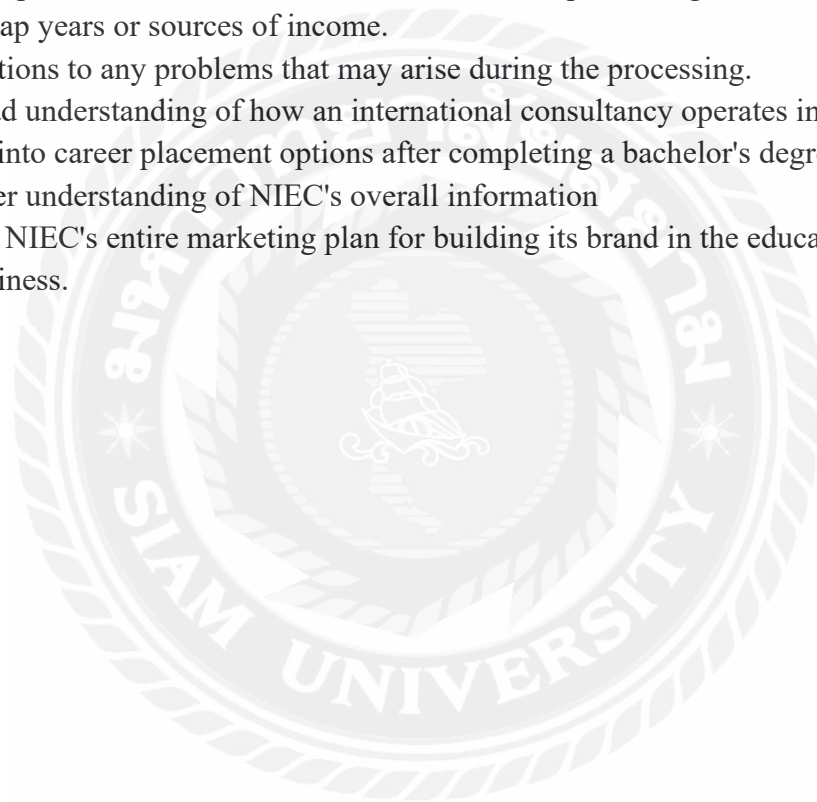
Studying abroad has become popular among Nepalese students because it is prestigious and there is peer pressure to go abroad; students want to return with better prospects, and Nepal lacks quality higher education. Students may want to earn an international degree for a variety of reasons, including familiarity with better facilities, higher income, a better lifestyle, and frustration with an underdeveloped country.

The author joined the company to understand more about international education and how companies like NIEC functions.

As a result, while some students are genuinely interested in pursuing higher education abroad, others are only applying due to peer pressure and the allure of studying abroad. An education consultancy assists students in obtaining higher education based on their interests, financial and academic capabilities, and, most importantly, what suits them best rather than what they believe is trending or what their peers pressure them to do.

Objective of the study

- To get an understanding of the significance of a professional counseling session
- To examine the potential issues that obstruct students' visa processing or obtaining university offers, such as gap years or sources of income.
- To devise solutions to any problems that may arise during the processing.
- To have a broad understanding of how an international consultancy operates in Nepal.
- To get insight into career placement options after completing a bachelor's degree.
- To have a better understanding of NIEC's overall information
- To learn about NIEC's entire marketing plan for building its brand in the educational consultancy business.



Chapter 2

Job Description and Responsibilities

Internship Role: Counselor Assistant

Internship Description:

The author had to work in every department at NIEC as an intern. Initially, the author was allocated to academics, which included helping students on the PTE, TOEFL, SATs, and other related tests. Whether it's online or in-person, dealing with customers is a must. Creating student profiles and completing university applications are two of the most common tasks. Follow-up calls to update the NIEC site with information on students. However, the firm afterward asked whether the author would want to transfer to the Australia Department as an intern under Ms. Gita Tuladhar (Australia/ Canada Counselor). She believed it would be helpful for her to work in a new department to broaden her knowledge and satisfy her interest because she had previously worked in the academic department.

All the jobs and responsibilities the author had throughout her internship are listed below:

- **Applications:** The author had to fill up university applications for the United States, Australia, and Canada based on the student's interests. Passport, latest and previous education transcripts, letter of recommendation, passing certificates, English proficiency test score, work recommendation (if any), training certificates (if any), certificates (if any), statement of purpose, resume, bank certificate, and marriage certificate (if married) are all required documents for university applications. She had to explore specific university websites to apply for universities in the United States, and some through application websites (applytexas and common app). She had to fill out applications in handwritten style according to the requirements for Australia, some through a study portal (website), and some through the college website. Finally, for Canada, she had to fill out university applications on the study board website.
- **Visa Application for the United States:** The author had to fill out a DS160 form (an online form for nonimmigrant visas) and a CGI federal form for this application (to book interview dates). To complete these papers, students must have an I20 (admission letter) from a university in the United States. The passport and I20 are essential papers to complete this form. Before the interview, students must pay 20,000 Nepali Rupees to reserve interview dates and \$350 (SEVIS fee, which is in addition to any visa costs we

must pay to the United States embassy, which finances the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)).

- **Documentation, Attestation, and Scanning:** The applications require certified documents for institutions in Australia. The author needed to document student files, certify them, and scan them to apply to institutions. Academic transcripts, passing certificates, work/ internship or training certificates, marriage certificates, English proficiency test scores, and passports were the major papers required. The above-mentioned documents are scanned and authenticated before being uploaded or sent to the colleges as needed. Other papers that must be scanned but are not required to be authenticated include spouse academic records, spouse passports, immunization cards, financial documents, and relationship certificates, among others. These papers must be scanned but are not required to be authenticated because they are as significant as the others.
- **Test Date Booking:** Under test date booking for PTE, TOEFL, and SAT, the author had to create a student account and arrange test dates depending on availability and the students' preferences. She had to tell them about the test fees as well as what they needed to bring to their exam. Each test has a monetary value attached to it. Students could pay their TOEFL fees to the counselor, but they had to pay their PTE and SAT fees at the bank. The PTE and SAT fees were calculated as follows: the original value + 15% tax plus 500 Nepali Rupees.
- **Customer Service:** As part of customer service, the author had to interact with students and potential customers about their questions about English proficiency courses, the NIEC fee structure, and basic questions about universities and countries based on the students' interests, whether in person or over the phone.
- **Other responsibilities:** At first, the author oversaw covering all departments, including checking test papers, invigilating mock-test halls, covering the front desk when needed, making follow-up calls, scanning documents, handing out library books, and providing information about English proficiency programs. When she was later transferred to the Australian department, she was in charge of preparing MOUs, NOCs, sponsorship letters, passport urgency letters, paperwork, document organization, and student health exam scheduling. In addition, she had to prepare required letters or papers based on the requirements.

Activities in coordinating with co-workers

The author had to coordinate with the counselor as interns at NIEC since they would assign us jobs and responsibilities for the day. She would be responsible for applying to institutions, checking papers, scanning documents, making follow-up calls, assisting departments as needed, and providing basic counseling to students and parents as directed by the counselors. Initially, she was simply responsible for student counseling, which included covering departments such as the library, front desk, and academic department as required, as well as completing applications for US universities and VISA applications. The counselor would offer her a list of institutions as well as the student's details, and she would have to apply to each one.

The author was later assigned to the Australia department as an assistant to Ms. Gita Tuladhar (Australia/Canada Counselor), mostly for application purposes. She had to apply to universities and colleges in Australia, Canada, and the United States. According to Ms. Gita's instructions, the author had to fill out NOCs, prepare passport urgency letters, schedule health examinations, update the NIEC site, organize papers, and help in US visa processing.

Contributions made during internship

Most of the intern's contributions to the firm were in the form of applications. The author was mostly responsible for applying to institutions and obtaining visas, allowing her supervisor to concentrate on other vital matters. Her supervisor was able to focus on other critical processing tasks such as financial papers, counseling sessions, offer letter evaluations, and visa updates since she took on responsibilities such as 15 applications for institutions in Canada on 'Canada Day' and completed 87 percent of them.

Universities in the USA	Minimum 4 applications per day
Universities in Australia	Minimum 6 application per day
Universities in Canada	Minimum 2 application per week
Universities in Canada (for Canada Day)	15 applications must
US Visa application (DS160 and CGI federal)	Minimum 2 to 3 application per day

The author's average application for students applying to Australia is 6 students (with attestation, handwritten application, and scanning those documents if required); for students applying to the United States is 3 to 4 students (with more than 2 universities) and filling out at least 2 DS160 and CGI federal forms per day.

Some of her contributions to the organization had more to do with enjoyment than with work. For Valentine's Day, she created hand-made cards to cheer everyone up.

Chapter 3

Problems faced during internship

During the internship, the biggest challenge the author had was remembering all the processes and documentation that were necessary for university applications and visa applications.

In terms of institutions in the United States, she had trouble recalling which ones partnered with NIEC since we had to enter an agent representative code. She had trouble comprehending the vocabulary and application questions at first, which is why she sought help from her coworkers and managers. For the application to the United States, we first registered a student account on the university's website. She had to fill up the required sections, which included personal information, academic history, family information, English proficiency test score, intake (summer, fall, spring, and winter), and primary interest. Passport, academic transcript, English proficiency test score, letter of recommendation, statement of intent, and bank certificate are all essential documents for the application.

In terms of Australian institutions, she had trouble comprehending the paperwork procedures, remembering applications, and remembering university application processes because they were extremely different from those in the United States. It was a little tricky to keep track of institutions and their application methods since some needed handwritten applications, others required filling out a study link portal (website), and some required filling out a university's website. Also the documents required are a passport, academic credentials (which include not just transcripts but also passing certificates and associated documents), English proficiency test score, marriage certificate (if married), and a gap explanation (work, training, letter from colleges, or even certificate), a letter of recommendation (if applicable), and any other documents (such as if the college changed its name from A to B the university requires a letter of name change or if the student's parents name is different in any official two documents like passport and citizenship explanation letter is required). For universities partnering with NIEC, these documents must not only be scanned and uploaded but must also be attested. As a result, knowing all the processes and regulations was a hassle for me.

The paperwork procedure for institutions in Canada was a little different, which made it a little difficult for her. Although no attestation was necessary, the documents had to be scanned individually. Transcripts and passing certificates had to be scanned individually. To apply to institutions in Canada, she had to create a student profile and fill out the essential information on a website (study board) (like personal details, academic background, English proficiency test score, and some other required documents like release form, agent declaration and so on). After completing the profile, she had to look for institutions that were relevant to the students' major

and city, which was often difficult to locate. She had to look for the correct university and course several times, which was time-consuming and challenging at times.

She had to fill out two forms for the VISA application: the DS160 and the CGI federal form. It was a little challenging to recall the needed protocol for these documents since students applied for visas from both Nepal and India. The DS160 form had to be completed in 10 to 15 minutes with a robust internet connection, otherwise, the application session would expire. It was a little challenging to continue retrieving the application and answering the same questions, which were already filled out before the expiration of the session. Furthermore, the DS160 applications are lengthy and time-consuming. The CGI federal application form, on the other hand, is very straightforward, albeit remembering to input the location correctly proved to be a challenge. As a result, we occasionally make the mistake of writing the location of the application interview in Nepal rather than India.

One of the issues was related to technical problems such as slow connection at times as well as power outages. As the internet could be sluggish at times, the application filling procedure can be challenging and time consuming. Due to the power outage, the entire desktop shuts down, forcing all apps and windows to quit, resulting in the need to restart the same application.

Some employees had a two-hour lunch break because they ate slowly, while others just took 15 minutes. Because they were so busy, she noticed some counselors taking a lunch break at about 3 p.m. This was problematic for everyone since they couldn't go to lunch even if we were hungry when they had a lot of work. Also, because some workers had longer lunch breaks, the author had to cover their jobs, resulting in a shorter and late lunch break.

Recommendation to the company

Even though the seniors are quite helpful, and the working atmosphere is pleasant, the author has a few suggestions for the management.

- The duties of the interns could be divided in a more organized way so everyone gets the same amount of work. It may be a good idea to appoint an official HR associate, as the work right now is done by different departments.
- Not your place as an intern to state this issue, also you legally do not have access to this info. Could suggest more bonuses or initiatives to boost morale.

- NIEC's marketing may benefit from creating more social media accounts like LinkedIn, TikTok, or other social media platforms. Nowadays, social media platforms such as TikTok, LinkedIn, and others help in the growth of businesses and serve as a strong marketing platform. As a result, if NIEC had an account on such social media sites, it would have contributed to the company's promotion.
- As a result of her research, the author discovered that NIEC has a positive image among the target audience. She occasionally had to deal with students who were interested in NIEC counseling for Germany and other European nations after hearing about NIEC's visa success record for the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. As a result, she believes NIEC should segment for nations with needs, which will provide competitors with more excellent competition from NIEC.

Learning during the Co-Op studies

During the internship the author learned that:

- She used to believe that applying to universities required the same paperwork and procedures all around the world. However, after working at NIEC, she discovered that that was not the case. We need a Statement of Purpose, Letter of Recommendation, passport, bank certificate, English proficiency score, and academic transcript to apply to institutions in the United States. However, we need a passport, academic transcripts and passing certificates, Letter of Recommendation, statement of purpose, gap explanation, marriage certificate, relationship certificate, property appraisal, income source, bank balance, English proficiency score, CA report, and other documents to apply to institutions in Australia. One of the things she learned was the varied types of paperwork necessary for different nations when applying for higher education.
- As a new intern, she had no understanding about even the most fundamental aspects of the visa processing and testing procedures. She learned how to communicate with students and their parents about basic information about NIEC's English proficiency test classes, basic fee structure information, basic visa processing information, which test would be best for which country, what documents were required, and how to pay for visa processing or test date booking. She learned how to deal with students and their parents, which was beneficial since she learned how to deal with clients from many viewpoints.
- Applying to various universities in various countries. The university applications and paperwork required by institutions in the United States, Australia, and Canada were all different, which made it a little complicated to keep up of at times. But, in the end, she

was able to comprehend and study the university application procedures for each university in each nation, which was both enjoyable and educational.

- The most significant thing she learned throughout this internship was how to operate under pressure. She was given several applications to finish at the same time, as well as additional tasks to accomplish during the day. She learned how to manage her time and finish all the duties that were given to me. She learned how to work under duress while still managing her breaks. As a result, working at NIEC taught me how to operate under pressure and provided me with a work atmosphere that encouraged me to do so.
- At NIEC, she learned how to prepare NOCs, schedule US visa interview dates, what was necessary during the English proficiency exam, how many Nepalese students are interested in studying abroad, how to draft a passport urgency letter and many other consultancy-related activities.



Chapter 4

Conclusion

Highlight of this Co-op studies at NIEC

Four months at NIEC sharpened the raw information that the author already possessed. From the first day of her internship, she learned a great deal about education consulting. Although the internship had nothing to do with her academic subject (finance and banking), it taught me the value of time management, efficient communication, and interpersonal relationships, all of which are critical for a student's personal development.

Because She had to engage with students and their parents daily during her job, She was able to further strengthen her communication skills. I also had to multitask because She had to fill out DS160 and CGI federal documents while filling out applications, which enabled me to become cognitively stronger.

Overall, her co-op courses at NIEC taught me how to manage and work under pressure, as well as what type of work atmosphere I would enjoy working in. These experiences have helped me become more outgoing and self-assured.

Self-assessment of work experience

This was a completely new experience for me because She had never interned at an educational consulting before and knew very little about how they operate. She learned how to deal with clients in person as well as over the phone, something She had primarily avoided during her previous internship. She learned a lot about how students apply to institutions in other countries. She gained a broad understanding of how consulting operates. She was scared at the start of her internship, and she made a few mistakes while filling out applications, which helped her learn how to improve herself in a completely different setting. She had the opportunity to work with clients, which helped me improve her communication skills and self-confidence. She took notes and asked around for information to work in a completely responsible manner and avoid making any mistakes when filling out university applications or visa applications. She was expected to do many projects every day, which helped her improve her time management abilities as well as her ability to operate under pressure while being psychologically calm.

Although this internship had nothing to do with her academic background (financial and banking), it helped her understand what type of work environment she would like to work in and how a consultancy operates in depth. In comparison to her first day at NIEC, she now like working there and finds it to be an enjoyable experience.

Limitation

- Because this study was based only on NIEC, it is possible that it does not represent every firm in the country's education industry.
- The study may not provide an entire view of the firm or the education industry due to the limited research time.
- In Nepal, there are few research papers on education consulting. As a result, it is inadequate in terms of facts, numbers, and references.



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