



Daniel Rusnak

NOT YOUR TRADITIONAL,
RUN-OF-THE-MILL INTERNSHIP



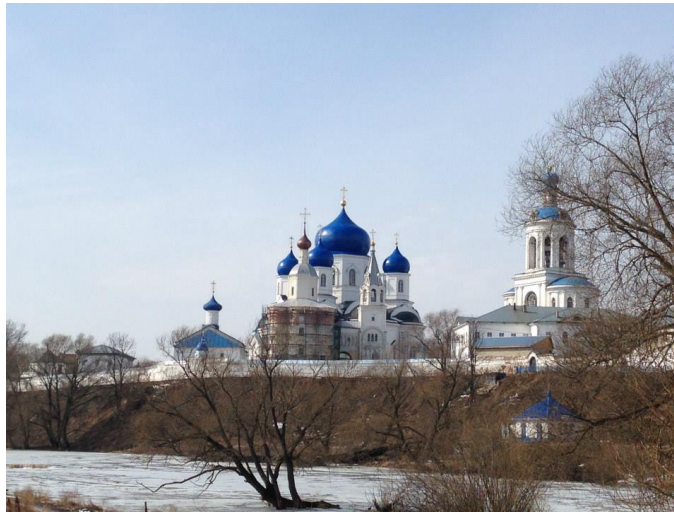
The internship in the [joint HSE-NES undergraduate program in economics](#) is not your traditional, run-of-the-mill internship. Instead of shadowing experts, interns are the experts. You're in the driver's seat. You decide what you're going to do and how you're going to do it. No bosses breathing down your neck. No coffee runs. And you work in a dynamic environment with ambitious, good-humored students and scholars.

In my 2014 internship, I chose to work as an English tutor. Teaching was never a chore. It was actually fun. Our lengthy dialogues were often colored by splashes of political controversy. I had the opportunity to learn about younger Russians' interpretation of their recent history. And, of course, it was incredibly satisfying to witness how dramatically the students improved. The one-on-one format produced a veritable metamorphosis in students' spoken English after just one semester.

I also worked at [the Merrill Lynch Writing Center](#). Grant applications, research statements, cover letters, and résumés were my bread and butter. I helped students refine their ideas, tailor their qualifications, and improve their written English overall. The students' applications were largely successful due to their existing accolades and exceptional abilities, of course. Still it felt good to interject at such vital moments in the students' careers.

The internship was not just personally rewarding, but professionally rewarding as well. After my tenure at the University, I continued to teach English in Spain and Hong Kong. In this way, the internship experience no doubt played a large role in prolonging my incorrigible globetrotting.

I should also underline that everyday life in Moscow was not all work. Moscow's gritty-but-pretty aesthetic and effortless eclecticism makes for a fun, trendy atmosphere. It also afforded ample time to pursue my own interests in Russian history, politics, and culture. Even ostensibly humble peregrinations through Moscow often translated into hours of thought and discussion.



And on the off chance that you want to take a break from Moscow's vibrant cultural scene, Moscow is also a great base for Eurasian travel. During my internship I was able to visit Minsk, Astana, Arkhangelsk and Prague (among others). It was a fantastic opportunity to interact with Soviet legacy more concretely.

As a graduate student in Russian and East European studies at the University of Oxford, I can attest to the value that comes from in-country experience. Aside from improving my Russian, the internship at HSE was also an opportunity to interview Russians and East Europeans about some of the historical discourses still affecting the region today. My internship also served to complicate my understanding of current issues and develop my current work on historical travel writing. I strongly recommend this internship to those who want to work in a fun, dynamic university environment and expand their knowledge of Russia.

