Gap Year Guru: Airport Parking & Hotels (APH) Compares Gap Year Working Visas for UK Backpackers

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With the increasing competition for graduate employment, it is not surprising that the most popular type of gap year is now a CV-boosting work placement abroad and according to a recent study by ABTA, there has been a 10 per cent increase in gap year travel bookings over the last 12 months*. Airport Parking & Hotels (APH) is therefore helping backpackers plan ahead with a detailed guide comparing the various working holiday visas for the most popular gap year destinations. The research can be found in the Know Before You Gosection of the APH website at www.aph.com/gapyear.

The research compares different working holiday and volunteering visas for 12 different countries including, Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Peru and Vietnam highlighting the visa cost, its duration, a person's eligibility to apply and the types of work permitted on the visa.

The price of a working holiday visa was found to vary considerably between countries, with costs ranging from £23 for the Working Holiday Scheme in Japan to £292 for the Temporary Work Visa in Brazil. However, backpackers should also keep in mind the additional costs for each gap year visa, such as insurance, medical fees and maintenance funds, as some countries demand applicants to have a certain amount of funds saved prior to applying for the visa. For example, applicants must have at least £2,500 in funds before applying for the Japanese Working Holiday Scheme and a minimum of £146 saved per month of their stay when applying for the New Zealand Working Holiday Scheme.

With regards to the validity of a visa, most of the working holiday and volunteering visas are valid for stays of up to six months. However, if applicants are looking for a longer trip, four of the countries researched offer visas for up to 23 and 24 months including Australia, Brazil, Canada, and New Zealand.

An important consideration for many applicants when choosing their working holiday visa may be the nature of employment permitted. Of the 12 countries researched, Argentina, India, Peru, and Vietnam only allowed unpaid volunteering opportunities for UK tourists. Thailand also has strict rules for UK citizens whereby teaching English in Thai schools is the only paid employment allowed with serious consequences for UK citizens found to be working on a tourist visa. However, If travellers prefer the prospect of helping those in need and volunteering, UK citizens may volunteer visa-free in Argentina and Peru for up to 90 and 183 days respectively.

To work for 24 months in Australia, applicants must work at least three of the first 12 months in Australia's primary industries such as seasonal agriculture or mining. If they do not complete the three month employment, the working holiday visa is only valid for a maximum of 12 months. In addition to this, Australian Working Holiday applicants cannot work for the same employer for more than six months. Meanwhile, Japan is keen to keep its traditional standards with employment in potential 'morally damaging' environments such as bars and nightclubs prohibited. The USA is also strict with issuing visas, permitting only 'casual summer work' on a J1 Summer and Work visa meaning frequent night shifts, warehouse work, or self-employment are strictly prohibited.

Gap year students should also take into consideration the eligibility requirements to apply for each visa. All visas require a valid UK passport and for many of the countries surveyed, it is essential to have plenty of time left on the applicant's passport before a renewal is required. The USA, for example, require six months remaining and Australia require one year.

For further information on Airport Parking and Hotels (APH),
Visit www.aph.com or call 01342 859515.

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NOTES TO EDITORS
*Research taken from ABTA in August 2015, available from:abta.com/news-and-views/press-zone/abta-reveals-top-gap-year-destinations

About Airport Parking and Hotels (APH)
Airport Parking and Hotels (APH) is the UK's award winning long stay airport parking operator and booking agency, after winning the Best Airport Parking Company for a fifth year running at British Travel Awards 2014. This year APH also celebrates its 35th year as a retailer and operator of pre-booked airport

parking and travel extras. APH offers parking at all major UK airports as well as airport hotels packaged with parking and airport lounges. APH is also a carbon balanced company and has, through support of the World Land Trust, helped purchase more than 1,000 acres of endangered rainforest.

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