



Career Connection

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Internship Success!

“Nothing ever becomes real until it is experienced” John Keats

The word *internship* usually refers to real-world work experience where students take on temporary roles as workers in an organization and reflect these experiences in an academic setting. Internships can assist you to learn more about a chosen industry or field, become more knowledgeable about general work functions, investigate organizational culture, learn career-related skills, perform a positive service for the community, and polish communication skills needed in the workplace, among others. The next steps outline the best practices to land and get the most out of your internship experience.

I Find Out About the Rules and Regulations Governing your Internship Program

- Where can I get a written description of my school’s internship program?
- Is there a list of recommended internships related to my field of interest?
- How many internship hours must I complete during the quarter/semester?
- Who will evaluate my internship performance?
- Will I receive credit or a grade for my internship?
- Do I arrange my own internship or will someone else make the initial contact for me?
- Is this internship integrated with my regularly scheduled classes or not?
- Does the internship involve learning contracts- documents in which the internship participant, employer, and sponsor acknowledge agreed-upon objectives?
- Can I expect an on-site visit from a faculty sponsor?
- Does a required class or seminar accompany my internship? Will I have projects, assignments, papers, or presentations to complete?
- Will I receive a stipend, reimbursement for expenses, or an hourly wage?
- Must I sign a waiver absolving my school of responsibility if I am injured while at my internship site?
- What transportation arrangements must I make?

II Set your Internships Goals (What’s in it for you?)

- How will your internship help you in developing career- related experiences?
- How will your internship assist you in developing valuable knowledge related to your field?
- What do you want to gain from your internship?
- How do you want to be enriched by your experiences?
- Beyond enhancing your resume with career related experiences and building contacts for a future job search, are there any other valuable goals your internship can help you attain?

III Identify what you can do for them (What do you have to offer?)

- Technical skills- basic knowledge of personal or mainframe computers, word processing or spreadsheet software, html, power point, publisher etc

- Clerical skills
- Facility with office equipment
- Communication skills, writing, public speaking, instructing
- Artistic skills, designing flyers, posters, logos
- Organizational skills, coordinating, managing, administering
- Foreign Language
- Positive Attitude, enthusiasm, willingness to tackle and task, eagerness to learn
- Good work behavior- punctuality, ability to meet deadlines, careful attention to details
- Other

IV Getting it Together

- Prepare your resume
- Make contact with employers. In some cases, your initial contact with employers will be made by a professor, an internship coordinator, or another individual. In most cases, however, you will be responsible for making the contact yourself, by either calling a prospective internship site or sending your resume with an accompanying cover letter.
- Prepare for the Internship interview, indicate clear goals, research the organization, review interview questions, and prepare some samples of your work to share, prepare questions to ask your interviewer. Follow up your interview with a Thank you Letter to show your appreciation for the interviewer's time and reiterate your interest in the position. Practice mock interviewing with a counselor at Career Connection.

V Making the Most out of Your Internship

- What typical emotional responses do interns have and how can I best handle my feelings?
- How do I get started? Would I fit in?
- How do I communicate with my supervisor? Should I ask for feedback?
- How do I ask my supervisor for a more challenging assignment?
- How do I ask for clarification or help?
- Can I turn down a request?
- How do I receive negative feedback? Or handle errors?
- How do I make my supervisor and coworkers members of my network?
- How's your internship shaping up?

VI Exiting your Internship

- Did you meet your learning objectives? Explain how.
- What was your most important contribution?
- In what ways did your internship disappoint you?
- What new skills did you develop or hone?
- How did your relationship with your supervisor either help or hinder you in meeting your goals?
- What were the highlights of your internship?
- List tips for future interns who select this site.

VII Communicating the Value of your Internship

- Your next step is to update your resume, using compelling language to effectively communicate your improved experience, knowledge, and skills to potential employers. Visit a career counselor at Career Connection to assist you in the process.
- Secure letters of recommendation.

** Adapted from Marianne Ehrlich Green. Internship Success. 1997, VGM Illinois, Chicago*