

INTERNSHIPS

One of the best ways for you to not only gain valuable work experience but to also fine-tune your career aspirations is by tackling one or more internships. Employers hiring new grads want to see work experience in your career field -- and internships are the way to obtain that experience.

Internship Success Tips:

- If you are interested in completing an internship experience, speak with your academic advisor and the Office of Career Services to help you identify the best timing/semester, location and career field for you and your goals.
- Start early! If you want a summer internship you will need to start looking during the fall semester or early spring semester at the latest. A lot of agencies have deadlines that occur during the fall semester for summer internships.

What Is An Internship?

Internship positions, otherwise known as experiential education, are windows into professional work, chances to take a career “test drive,” and opportunities to explore your career choices. Like any employment process, being selected to complete an internship opportunity takes planning, professionalism, and a significant amount of effort.

An internship is a work or service experience that is related to an individual’s career goals. The internship is monitored and has intentional, specific and measurable learning outcomes throughout the experience.

Benefits to Completing an Internship

- **Employment:** Students with internship experiences stand out from the crowd in the job hunt.
- **Take Charge of Your Learning:** Internships are opportunities for you to identify areas in your field that you would like additional real-life experience.
- **Theory into Practice:** Apply theories learned in class to real-life situations.
- **Networking:** Develop contacts in your field and learn more about future employment opportunities.
- **Awareness through Increased Community Involvement:** Develop a greater understanding of your role and potential contributions to society.
- **Personal Growth:** Solving problems in unfamiliar situations can bolster your self-confidence and may also show you where you need skills improvement.
- **New Environment:** A new environment will introduce you to new challenges and opportunities to grow.
- **Research:** It is an opportunity for you to gain information to help you in your academic and career exploration process.

Resources Available Through The Office of Career Services

The Office of Career Services provides: Bronco Career Link: a place where students can get assistance with resume development and reviews, career counseling. Also, several national internship resources located under our Internship Link and in the Office of Career Services library.

[Walt Disney World College Program](#)

- [Program Information](#)
- [Disney Online E-Presentation \(Disney Website\)](#)
<http://disney.go.com/disneycareers/disneycollegeprogram/epresentation/index.html>
- [Telephone Interview Tips](#)
- [After Accepting the Offer from Disney Program](#)

- The Washington Center (www.twc.edu)
- The Walt Disney College Program
- (www.wdwcollegeprogram.com)
- DC Internships (www.dccareers.org)
- InternJobs.com
- Idealist.org
- Getthatgig.com
- INROADS.org
- InternZoo.com
- Studentjobs.gov
- Rising Star Internships (www.rsinternships.com)
- SummerJobs.com
- InternAbroad.com
- Interlochen Center for the Arts (www.interlochen.org)

Managing Your Internship Process

Depending on your academic major, you may have discipline specific requirements to complete during your internship process. Please check with your faculty advisor and the Office of Career Services for more information.

How to Get That Internship -- and Excel in it!

Methods for finding and succeeding in one or more internships.

- **Determine Your Internship Goals**

Before you can even start thinking about finding an internship, you need to spend time reflecting on your goals for obtaining an internship.

- **Some Questions to Clarify Your Internship Goals**

What are your specific career interests? An internship is a great tool to help you define your career goals. For example, if you're majoring in history, but have an eye on a political career, you might consider an internship with a local or state politician. Or, an internship can help further refine your career goals. For example, if you're a marketing major but not sure whether

you want to go into advertising or public relations, you should consider getting internships in both areas to help you decide which is best for you.

Why do you want an internship -- and what do you hope to gain from it? There are multiple reasons for obtaining an internship, including answering the question above. Other possible reasons include learning new skills, gaining networking connections, adding work experience to your resume, and as an entry point that you hope leads to a full-time position with the employer when you graduate.

What type of organization are you interested in? Organizations come in all sizes and shapes, from Fortune 500 companies to not-for-profit organizations. What are you looking for? Issues to consider include size, ownership, corporate culture, etc.

What industry would be best for your needs? Even when you know exactly what you want to do, you can still be uncertain about the type of industry that best suits you. For example, if you are a natural-born salesperson, you really have the option of working in any industry, but pharmaceutical sales is quite different from selling insurance

Where do you want to have your internship? If your internship is during the regular semester, you obviously need an internship close to your college campus, but during the summer months you may wish to have an internship near home so you can save on expenses (and enjoy mom or dad's cooking/laundry service/etc.) or in a location where you hope to land a full-time position when you graduate -- or just to experience a place in which you have never lived before.

Will you consider both paid and nonpaid internships? It would be great if all internships paid, but in reality a large number do not - especially in certain industries. So, you need to decide whether you can afford to not get paid during your internship.

Do you want college credit for the internship? Many colleges offer at least some college credit for internships. The plus side (besides earning the credits) is that there is usually an internship program with an established list of employers and internships available to you. The down side is that there may be more restrictions on the type and amount of work you can do based on the program guidelines.

- **Prepare and Polish Your Job Search Skills**

It is increasingly important for you to have a strong set of job-search skills.

We recommend you spend some time polishing these skills:

[Cover Letter Writing](#)

[Resume Preparation](#)

[Interviewing Strategies](#)

- **Find or Track Down Internship Sources**

Okay. If you've gotten this far, it's now time to find that ideal internship that perfectly fits all your goals and needs.

So, where do you find internships?

- **Some Internship Sources**

Office of Career Services. Just about all career services offices have a list of internship programs, important application dates, and other sources of internship information. This office is a great place to start your search. Some offices even have a special internship coordinator.

Major/Minor Department. Major-specific internship programs are frequently maintained by the department office. One or more faculty members may specifically handle internships, so make sure you investigate these sources.

Networking Sources. Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a specific type of internship; these people should include your family, your friends (at school and at home), your family's friends, your professors, past employers, alumni, etc. Just as with job-hunting, networking may be one of your best sources for internships -- especially for competitive internships.

Internship and Career Fairs. Most colleges (or college consortiums) offer at least one career fair during the academic year, and often one focuses specifically on internships. Even if you are looking for an internship in a different geographic location, go to the fairs and network with the recruiters. Many organizations have multiple offices -- and you may later change your mind.

Alumni Office. Many (if not all) colleges now ask alumni if they would be willing to sponsor current college students as interns - and these alums are a great source for internships as well as a networking source for other internships. Take advantage of this resource! This information may either be found in the career services office or the alumni office.

Company Websites. If you have already identified a specific set of companies where you would like to intern, you should consider going straight to the source by visiting the career section of each company's Website.

Internship Websites. There are a few general internship Websites, as well as a number of industry-specific Websites. A good resource, but internship sites have lagged behind the development of job sites, so don't depend too much on these resources.

Books and Periodicals. There are some great print sources of internships. First, there are annual directories of internships. The other print source is trade magazines and newspapers published for your major or career field. If you are a member of a student organization, you may already have a subscription to at least one of them. Your college library should also have subscriptions to these publications -- as should some of your professors. These publications often publish information about internship programs.

Cold Contact. If none of these other internship sources work for you, or if you have a specific geographic location you want to target for your internship, consider using the cold calling method to find your internship. This process involves identifying a list of companies and writing them asking for an internship. Where can you get information about companies in a specific geographic location? Consider contacting that region's chamber of commerce for a list of member companies -- or just get your hands on a phone book for that area.

- **12-Keys To Making The Most of Your Internship(s)**

Set Personal Goals. While some internships are very structured, others are not, so you need to spend some time before you start the internship setting goals that you want to accomplish. Maybe it's deciding on what area within marketing that you want to specialize, or learning new skills, or building your network. Whatever your goals, you will feel a greater sense of accomplishment once you achieve them. Hint: Setting unrealistic goals could make even a good internship seem bad, so make sure your goals are realistic and attainable in your internship.

Have Regular Meetings with your Supervisor(s). Sound obvious? Well, maybe, but you may get a supervisor who never schedules meetings with you or travels quite a bit, so you have to make sure to have regular meetings where you can share experiences and lessons learned -- both good and bad -- as well as give progress reports. Hint: While you want to keep your supervisor abreast of your accomplishments, remember to also be a good listener and learn as much as you can during these meetings.

Tackle all Tasks with Enthusiasm and a Positive Attitude. In just about every company, the new hire/intern is going to have to "pay his or her dues." You will undoubtedly be given some grunt work to do, such as making photocopies, but the key is to complete all your work assignments with the same level of enthusiasm and professionalism. Hint: You might also consider working extra hours (beyond the required

Avoid Negativity. The quickest way to kill a good internship is being negative. So, avoid complaining, being rude, disrespecting coworkers, arriving late, leaving early, being closed-minded, missing deadlines, appearing arrogant, wearing improper attire, acting unprofessionally, appearing inflexible, and taking part in office politics. Hint: A common mistake among interns and new hires is treating secretaries and clerks as being beneath them -- avoid this behavior at all costs.

Never Ignore a Chance to Learn More About the Company/Industry. Take every opportunity presented to you to attend company or industry meetings, conferences, and events; participate in training workshops; and read all company materials. Hint: Meetings may appear (and actually be) boring to you, but they can often offer a good chance to increase your knowledge, network, and build relationships.

Get as Much Exposure as Possible. Some of the best internships rotate you among departments and supervisors, but if yours doesn't, don't let that stop you from tackling new tasks, meeting people outside your department, and attending company social events. The more you are exposed to new ideas and new people, the more you'll learn. Hint: Joining the company softball team (or other informal group) is a great opportunity to meet new people in a relaxed and informal environment.

Don't be Afraid to Ask Questions. Always remember that an internship is a learning experience for you. While the employer expects to get a certain level of work from you, you are not expected to know everything. Seek advice and raise questions whenever you encounter something that is not familiar to you. Be open-minded about new ideas and procedures -- remember that you don't know everything and that your professors didn't teach you everything. Hint: Smart people know that there really is no such thing as a dumb question, so ask before doing.

Take Initiative. Employers love employees who dive into tackling tough problems and who think "outside the box" in finding solutions. Just make sure you work with your supervisor(s) so you don't overstep your authority -- and make sure you share successes with her. Hint: There is a fine line between taking initiative and being perceived as a "know-it-all," and for interns especially, it is best to err on the side of caution.

Find a Mentor. A mentor is someone at a higher level in the organization that looks out for you and makes sure you are learning what you need to know and accomplishing what you need to do. A mentor can also shield you from office politics and be a good sounding board for you to discuss ideas, ask questions, etc. Hint: Your supervisor could be your mentor, but it could also be another person within the organization.

Network, Network, Network. One of the key tools of job-hunting is utilizing your network to find your next career step, whether another internship or a job upon graduation (and beyond). Build professional relationships with your supervisor(s) and other managers in the organization. These people are also a good source for getting other job-hunting advice and tips from their years of experience. Hint: Even if you have a bad experience on an internship, never burn your bridges because you never know when it could come back and hurt you. Always leave on good terms.

Leave with Tangible Accomplishments. One of your goals with any internship is leaving it with some tangible results -- both for your resume and your career portfolio (if you use one). Maybe you developed a brochure, computerized an inventory system, organized a sales conference, met with clients, tracked industry trends, etc. Hint: Keeping a journal may help you remember all the things you accomplished on your internship.

Enjoy Yourself. Most internships are great experiences, so make sure you have some fun while you're working and learning. Don't be so uptight that you are perceived as something you're not. Hint: Just make sure you don't overdo the fun -- and avoid office romances.