

HOW TO FIND AND COMPLETE A VALUABLE INTERNSHIP



In today's job market, the importance of internships has increased for both students and employers.

Employers now expect students to have engaged in some sort of career-related work before graduation. The internship experience is ready-made for doing just that.

An internship allows college students to take their planned career out for a "test drive" to find out first hand what they like and, potentially, what they don't like about their chosen field.

Meanwhile, internships give students a chance to work in their field (possibly for the first time) and gauge their work performance and aptitude for the job. Organizations benefit from having interns, too! Employers can attract talent to their door, mentoring, training, developing, and possibly even hiring interns and solidifying a foundation for the intern's future within their organization.

BENEFITS OF AN INTERNSHIP

- Gain career-related work experience in a chosen industry or related field of study.
- Enhance relevance to course of study by putting theory to practice.
- Realistically test career objectives.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Develop interpersonal skills and teamwork.
- Develop professional work habits.
- Improve communication and networking skills.
- Establish a network of professional contacts, mentors, and references for after graduation.
- Increase marketability; gain a competitive edge and insight into the industry.
- Potentially transition smoothly into full-time employment with possibility of a post-graduation job.

STEPS TO PURSUING AN INTERNSHIP

- Assess your inventory of skills and interests. Use SIGI 3 in Career Services or at home. Check with our office staff for more details.
- Make an appointment with a Career Counselor in Career Services, LBJSC 5-7.1, by calling 512.245.2645.
- Create your profile and upload your resume in the Jobs4Cats database.
- Develop a cover letter and resume specific to the position to which you're applying. Have one of our Career Counselors critique it for you.
- Investigate prospective organizations' websites and check for current internship vacancies.
- Prepare for interviewing. Do a mock interview in Career Services or on Interview Stream.
- Research, research, research the organization before the interview. This is an absolute must!
- Present a professional image via your attire when interviewing.

HINTS FOR RESEARCHING INTERNSHIPS

- The ideal time to pursue an internship is the second semester of your sophomore year or early junior year, leaving you the option of doing a second internship during your senior year.
- Attend job fairs held at Texas State during the fall and spring semesters. This will allow you to network with employers who may be seeking interns.
- Check Jobs4Cats on the Career Services website at www.careerservices.txstate.edu for a list of current internship postings and list of job fairs.
- Search the Internet for companies, government agencies or non-profits that offer internships.
- Research specific internship websites under the "Resources" link on the Career Services homepage.
- Look for companies coming to campus to interview prospective interns. You can locate these companies in Jobs4Cats through the on-campus recruiting link.
- Attend a workshop facilitated by employers. Career Services offers a large number of programs and special events during the regular semesters.
- Don't forget-your department internship coordinator must approve internships for credit.

EVALUATING AN INTERNSHIP OFFER

Internships, especially those that are unpaid, work on the barter system. You are bartering your time, energy and skills for training, hands-on experience, contacts and increased marketability. Think carefully about the internship offers that you receive. Make sure that you are getting what you need from this exchange. Some key components that lead to a successful internship are:

- Work that feels meaningful and useful.
- Work that challenges you to grow.
- Supervisor/staff who make you feel like a part of the work group.
- Supervisor/staff who are accessible to you (on-site and available) and are willing to guide you and answer your questions.
- Opportunities to learn about the career field. This might be done through your day-to-day activities, through informal conversations with staff, or through participation in staff meetings, site visits or staff trainings.

You won't know the benefits or disadvantages of an internship until you are actually on the job. By asking some of the following questions during the interview process, you can learn a lot about the position you are applying for:

- Could you describe some of the projects or assignments I would be involved in and my role in each?
- What type of supervision do interns receive? Do interns meet with supervisors routinely? How do interns get feedback on their work?
- Could you describe the work culture at this organization?
- What are the most important qualities you look for in an intern?
- Have you ever had an outstanding intern? What qualities made him/her outstanding?
- Are interns included in staff programs such as meetings, seminars or training sessions? Do interns observe site visits or meetings with clients?
- How much time is spent on daily administrative work compared to time spent on career-related projects?

Reflect on the responses that are given to these questions. Do these responses make you enthusiastic or doubtful about the internship?

If you are offered the internship and are not sure whether you want to accept, make an appointment to meet with your prospective supervisor or speak with her/him over the phone in order to clarify the points about which you are uncertain.

PREPARE YOURSELF TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP BY ATTENDING JOB FAIRS HOSTED BY CAREER SERVICES

- **All Majors Career Fair**
- **Health Professions Career Fair**
- **Construction and Concrete Industries Career Fair**
- **STEM Career Fair**
- **Mass Communication Career Fair**
- **Community and Global Impact Career Fair**
- **Teacher Job Fair**
- **Criminal Justice Career Fair**
- **McCoy College of Business Administration Career Expo**
- **Nonprofit and Summer Job Fair**

Visit the Career Services website and click on the Events and Fairs tab to see the dates and other details for these events.



www.careerservices.txstate.edu

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