

Internships

A Taste of the Future

What is an Internship?

An internship is a short work experience in a particular field or job, under the guidance of an employer. Internships can come in many different forms, ranging in length, tasks and fields. You can create a unique work experience to fit your varying needs and interests. It's never too late to participate in an internship, so no matter what your age, take the first step towards your future. Internships allow you to explore many fields while building your résumé and networking with colleagues and supervisors.



Why Intern?

Explore – Internships provide an opportunity to explore fields and jobs of interest. Don't get stuck in a career that doesn't fit you; try it out first.

Build Your Résumé – Experience is key to strong résumés. Internships allow you to gain experience before entering the job market.

Network – Relationships lead to opportunities. By interning you can meet and connect with individuals in your field.

Apply Your Skills – An internship allows you to use the skills you've gained in a real world experience. Gain confidence in your abilities and learn what you can improve.

Learn Practical Skills – Confused about what professional attire is? In an internship you can practice perfecting your dressing skills, your office manners and your ability to balance work and personal responsibilities.

Stay Competitive – 25% of new full-time workers in the US were recruited from internship programs. More and more companies are using internships to find future employees.

Put yourself in a
position to be noticed!



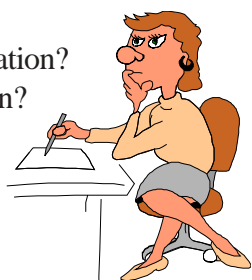
Three Steps to Finding an Internship

1. Determine your interests and goals

The first step to finding the right internship is to identify your interests and expectations. Feel free to explore and experiment; you never know what you may find.

Use these questions and others to help you determine what your internship expectations are:

- What careers am I interested in?
- What type of work environment best suits me?
- Do I need a paid internship?
- What location would I prefer to work in?
- What is my availability?
- What can I offer an organization?
- What skills do I want to gain?



2. Research

After figuring out what your interests are, find out more about available opportunities.

Internet Resources – There are several websites that allow you to design your own internship search:

- 🔗 www.idealists.org
- 🔗 www.craigslist.com
- 🔗 www.rsinternships.com
- 🔗 www.internjobs.com

School Resources – Most colleges, community colleges and universities also have an online career center with resources to find internships.

Book Resources –

- *The Best 109 Internships*
by Mark Oldman and Samer Hamadeh
- *Vault Guide to Top Internships*
by Samer Hamadeh

Personal Resources – Talk with counselors, friends, family and teachers about contacts in your field of interest. Call, e-mail or write individuals in your field to ask for advice on how to get a similar job and if they know of any opportunities for internships and observing experiences. You never know what may become available after asking.

Organizational Resources – Find organizations, businesses and other employers that match your interests by searching for non-governmental organizations, corporations, government organizations, and businesses. Even if they don't offer a formal internship, making contact could lead to opportunities.

3. Apply

You've found several organizations and opportunities that interest you... Now it's time to send in your application.

In your application include:

A Résumé – See the Women Work! *Writing Your Résumé* tipsheet for advice on creating a professional résumé.

An Individualized Cover Letter – See the Women Work! *Writing a Cover Letter* tipsheet for advice on writing a distinctive cover letter.

Writing Samples – Search for short, well-written pieces or excerpt a longer work. Make sure it is the type of writing you'll need to do on the job.

References and Recommendations – Recommendations from previous employers or other individuals who can speak to your work performance are preferred. Speak to teachers, past employers or supervisors and friends. Be sure to ask if they are willing to give a **positive** recommendation.

Find help putting together these materials at www.womenwork.org

Some employers may require an interview. See the Women Work! *Job Interview* tipsheet for tips on how to prepare for your interview.

Follow up after submitting an application to show how interested and enthusiastic you are about their organization and future opportunities.

Always apply to more than one internship to give yourself options and backups.

Got the Internship. Now What?

You've been offered an internship position, what now? Before accepting the offer, make sure it fits your interests and goals. First, find answers to the following:

- Does the internship pay?
- What type of work will you be doing?
- Does the internship fit your goals?
- Does the work environment match your work style?
- Are you capable of doing the work expected?

If the internship is unpaid, look for grants and fellowships. Many programs and organizations have funds to help pay for interns.

Clarify your start date, the time, the organization's address and to whom you should report. You don't want to be late on your first day!



During the Internship:

Be Professional – Practice your professional behavior, wear the appropriate attire, be on time and meet your deadlines.

Take Initiative – Once you are comfortable, be proactive. Offer suggestions for tasks you would like to complete and initiate conversations with supervisors and co-workers. Use this opportunity to ask questions about various jobs and learn more about your career interest.

Be Enthusiastic – Despite uninteresting tasks, keep a positive attitude. Use the time to observe the type of jobs you would like to have in the future.

Check-In with Supervisors – Use this as an opportunity to learn what areas you can improve upon. Ask your supervisor for feedback or evaluations.

Observe – If there are projects or meetings you can't help with, but would like to observe, ask.

After the Internship:

Reflect on your experiences – Review what you have learned and think about whether this career matches your work style and goals.

Follow Up – Send thank you notes and ask your supervisors for recommendations or references.

Keep in touch – You never know when a job prospect may come up at the place you interned or at another organization with which your supervisors network.

Not sure if an internship is right for you? Check out the *Women Work! Apprenticeships* tipsheet to learn of other work and learning opportunities. All of Women Work!'s tipsheets are available at www.womenwork.org.

