

How and Why to get an Internship



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What is an internship?

Internships are pre-entry level professional work experiences related to your major and/or to your career interests. They are temporary positions, generally lasting for at least one semester or summer.

The primary purpose of an internship is to gain experience while learning -- a chance to apply what you have been studying in the classroom in a real work setting.

Internships come in a lot of different formats: They may be paid or unpaid. They may be part-time or full-time at the same time you are enrolled in classes or during the summer. You may receive academic credit for your time and effort, or you may choose not to. All internships will teach you *something* about your future career path, even if that "something" is that you don't want to continue in that particular field.

An internship experience allows you to "test drive" a career while gaining valuable work experience, making you more competitive in the post-graduation job market. Through these experiences you can clarify your career interests, develop professional skills, and strengthen your self-confidence. Internships enhance classroom learning and provide you with references and contacts in your chosen career field.

How is an internship different from a part-time job or community service?

Type	Duration	Payment	Mentorship	Duties
Internship	Definite time period, usually one semester or summer	Sometimes	Yes – someone is assigned to you to help you learn	Meaningful duties or projects related to your major
Community Service (volunteering)	Indefinite time period or a one-time project	Never	No, although depending on your supervisor, you may be mentored	For the benefit of the organization without regard to your major
Part-time Job	Indefinite	Always	Maybe, depending on your supervisor	Typically day-to-day work to support the employer, usually without regard to your major or interests

As you can see from the above chart, an internship is designed to give you direct, *meaningful* experience in your field of study, for a specified length of time.

How Will You Benefit From an Internship?

YOU WILL...

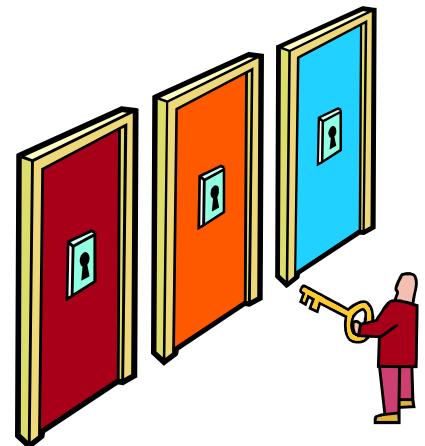
- learn more about a specific industry/field to see if it's right for you
- have an opportunity to get to know yourself better – your likes and dislikes
- gain practical experience while applying theoretical knowledge
- increase your marketability and be competitive in the full time job market upon graduation
- become more familiar with specific work functions and learn career-related skills and behaviors
- develop a relationship with a professional and cultivate a network of contacts in your field

DECIDE WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE YOU WANT AND WHAT YOU WANT TO LEARN:

The best ways to end up with a great internship experience is to consciously *decide* what kind of experience will look good on your resume and will give you the most information about the direction you want to take your career.

Say you're an accounting major, but haven't decided on whether to apply for one of the "big 4" firms or work in a smaller company. An internship will give you a chance to sample the company culture and help you decide if it's right for you.

Or maybe you are interested in both Marketing *and* Public Relations, but aren't sure which one suits you better. Spend the summer or semester in one of those fields or combination Marketing/PR department in a non-profit organization, and most likely you'll be able to make an informed decision by the time the internship is over.



When Should You Plan to do an Internship?

WHEN IN YOUR COLLEGE CAREER?

Participating in an internship early in your college career will offer you the added advantage of having multiple internships before you graduate. Career Development recommends that you have at least two internships - your first internship in your junior year (or the summer before) and a second internship at least one semester prior to graduation.

Although some students choose to start earlier, your junior year is usually the most desirable timeframe for gaining practical, hands-on experience in one of your interest areas. At this level of your education you have typically completed several upper division courses and have acquired skills that you can offer to an employer. If you discover during your first internship that you have other interests, there is still time to have another internship.

WHAT TIME OF YEAR IS BEST?

Internships are available all year -- fall, spring, and summer -- with many employers preferring interns to continue in the position past the initial semester or summer. During the school year, part-time work schedules are usually flexible and negotiated with your supervisor upon acceptance of the internship. Some summer internships are full-time – giving you an almost “real work world” experience. The best time for you is when you can fit it into your schedule without it eating into your class and study time.



Your Internship Timeline:

There are no hard rules about how long it takes to get an internship. Some very competitive internships select students up to a year in advance; but it's also possible to land a great internship in just a few weeks.

If you know where you want to intern, the best strategy is to call and ask when you should apply.



12 - 6 MONTHS BEFORE:

- Start thinking about what you'd like to learn during an internship.
- Make an appointment with Career Development to talk about options and resources.
- Begin talking to your professors about being references for you and about possible internship placement sites.

6 - 3 MONTHS BEFORE:

- Start or update your resume and learn how to write cover letters – Career Development will be happy to help you.
- Narrow down your choices for internship locations and begin sending out your resume and cover letters.
- Talk to your advisor if you're interested in getting credit to find out what you need to do.

3 – 1 MONTHS BEFORE:

- Follow up with a phone call or email if you haven't heard anything in 1-2 weeks.
- Make an appointment with Career Development to have a mock interview to polish your interview skills.
- Interview and choose your internship site.



The “Two Out of Three” Rule to Choosing your Internship:

Choosing your internship will usually come down to the one that meets **at least two out of three** criteria that are most important to you:

1. **Compensation** – depending on your financial need, whether or not the internship is paid could be a deal-breaker for you.
2. **Proximity** - Must be geographically located in an area that is convenient or desirable to you
3. **Relevance/Desirability** – The experience offered is what you want to gain, for an employer that you highly value.



EXAMPLES:

Internship	Compensation	Proximity	Relevance/Desirability	Take it?
Bluejackets Marketing Internship	None/40 hours You'll have to get another job	Close to home	Opportunity to get your foot in the door to your highly-desired field of sports marketing – priceless!	YES!
Exterior Portfolio, Inc. Accounting Intern	Paid	Not close to home – you'll have to find a place to live	A great chance to get real experience and build your resume	YES!
Cleveland Botanical Garden Research Internship	Unpaid	You're not from Cleveland!	As a biology major, this is exactly what you need	No – maybe if it was paid, but can't support self in Cleveland

Identifying a Valuable Internship Experience:

The following list of criteria is used by Career Development when helping employers start an internship program. These same criteria will help you evaluate whether or not an employer is offering you a quality experience.

- **The internship must offer relevant experience in the student's chosen field.** Students may perform some routine or clerical duties, but their responsibilities must be largely career-related. For example, if an accounting office has a position that involves nothing more than answering the phone, making copies, filing and running errands, it does not qualify as an internship. But if students are also provided projects that involve accounting, reconciling, financial reporting or processing-related paperwork, then it becomes a learning experience related to their field, and would qualify as an internship.
- **There are clear beginning and end dates.** Internships are usually one semester with the option of continuing for additional semesters.
- **There should be a clear Internship Position Description** structured in ways that simulate an actual job which includes substantial level of responsibility, with duties, supervision, requirements and benefits clearly stated and agreed upon.
- **Someone must act as a mentor to the student.** In other words, students are not just “handed a list of things to do”. Students must interact on a regular basis with someone who has experience in their intended field. This interaction should include instruction, guidance, and advice. In addition, if the student receives academic credit, some academic departments may have specific learning objectives or other criteria that must be met.
- **Interns should be encouraged to contribute to projects,** ask questions, absorb information, and provide feedback as part of their learning experience. (Even if “regular” employees are not encouraged to do this in the organization.)
- **The organization should have a clear written agreement** with the intern about expectations, responsibilities, evaluation, resources, learning goals, supervision, and work schedule. A copy should be provided to the intern.

If the position does not include most of the above criteria, it might just be a part-time job!

That’s okay, if they are offering you a position with wages, and you will learn something about your career path from the job.



Paid? Unpaid? Credit? No Credit?

Money is usually a good thing, as is academic credit. But an internship in any of the quadrants on the right can be a good fit for you.

		ACADEMICS	
		CREDIT	NO CREDIT
C O M P E N S A T I O N	P A I D	Usually the best option to both be paid and receive credit	If you don't need the credit to graduate, just being paid for your work is a good thing
	U N P A I D	If you need the credit, you might be willing to forego being compensated	Sometimes necessary to gain the experience

Regardless of whether your internship is paid or unpaid (volunteer) the awarding of credit is up to you and your department. If you come across an employer who is *requiring* you to sign up for credit, please contact the Career Development office for assistance.

CREDIT OPTIONS

It is possible to earn academic credit for almost any internship; however, credit policies vary by department. Some departments such as Accounting have formal internship programs that require applications and have GPA requirements. Other majors only require you to add the appropriate course to your schedule and get a faculty member to serve as your advisor. Where academic credit is earned, you will probably need to complete independent study assignments or attend meetings as specified by the academic area granting the credit.

Credit is contingent upon successful completion of the work experience and the academic assignments. You register and pay tuition for these credit hours in the same manner that you do for classroom learning experiences. Career Development will help you prepare for the application process and help you find an internship; your academic department will advise you about credit policies, and refer you to the faculty member in charge of internships for your department.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF AN UNPAID INTERNSHIP

Experience is experience. An unpaid internship will be listed as "Relevant Experience" on your future resumes right along with paid experience. In some fields such as non-profit administration, marketing, or the arts, finding a paid internship is not easy. Consider the benefits of an internship, including greater employability after graduation, before you rule out an unpaid internship. Often unpaid internships require fewer hours, which can be flexibly scheduled between classes and give you time to work a part-time job for money.

So Where Should You Look For An Internship?



If you are willing to relocate, you could accept an internship anywhere in the world. Internships are available in government, private businesses, non-profit agencies, and even on campus – any place where people are employed. Your internship could be in Columbus or as far away as Europe or Australia -- the choice is yours!

HERE ARE THE TOP RECOMMENDATIONS TO FINDING AN INTERNSHIP:

- 1. Faculty Connections:** Ask your major faculty members if they have connections to employers in their field. Some academic departments (like communication and English) have a specific faculty member who coordinates internships.
- 2. www.CrusaderCareers.com:** This is Capital's own job/internship website. The majority of the postings are in central Ohio. If you've never logged in before, use your student ID NUMBER as your username and password.
- 3. www.ColumbusInternships.com** –This is a listing of internships in the Columbus area, put together by the Columbus Chamber of Commerce.
- 4. Attend CareerFest** – our annual career fair – held the first Friday in February.
- 5. Make an appointment with Career Development.** We keep an **Internship Database** (places that other students have held internships) for you to explore as well as personal advice on where to look, depending on your major and interests.
- 6. Networking:** Ask your friends, your family, your family's friends – virtually anyone you know – for advice and ideas on how to get into your field of choice. Try using your social networking website, like Facebook, MySpace or the professional networking site LinkedIn to advertise that you're available for an internship.
- 7. Other websites:** If you're not limited to the central Ohio area, then there are a variety of websites you can explore for postings and ideas:

NACElink – go to Career Development's website to register. Click on Job and Internship Listings, and scroll down to the logo.

State of Ohio Internships: <http://careers.ohio.gov/> Search in Categories for Internships.

Washington D.C.: The Washington Center: www.twc.edu and The Fund for American Studies: www.dcinternships.org are two to try.

Federal Internships: www.studentjobs.gov

Nonprofit/Public Service/Human Service Internships: Try Idealist: www.idealist.org and the AmeriCorps program: www.americorps.org

Internships Abroad: www.studyabroad.com/internabroad will get you started

- 8.** Use the Internet to search for more possibilities. Try Googling "[your interest area] + internship + [your desired location]" and see what you get.

The Application Process:

In most cases, you'll find applications directions in the internship posting. You might need to apply directly to the company via email or US mail, or through a website.

1. Follow directions **exactly**.
2. Apply before the deadline.
3. Make sure your resume is **FLAWLESS**.
4. Always include a cover letter, even if not required.
5. Follow up to make sure your application was received.
6. Prepare for your interview.

RESUME AND COVER LETTER ASSISTANCE

For help with your resume, the best place to start is with our "How to Write a Resume" booklet, available in Career Development or on our website:

www.Capital.edu/CareerDevelopment and click on the left side Career Booklets link.

Career Development staff and interns are always available to review your resume and offer suggestions on how to make it even better.

Yes, every application needs a cover letter. Cover letters serve to introduce you to the employer and tell them why you're qualified for the position. If you've never written one before, stop by Career Development to pick up our "How to Write a Cover Letter" booklet, or download it from the website listed above.

INTERVIEWING MADE EASIER

Yes, we have a booklet for that as well. The Career Development staff will also help you prepare for your interview with a "Mock Interview" in which you can practice answering questions and allow us to evaluate your technique and offer suggestions to improve your performance.

Remember – the employer is looking for an intern who will be a benefit *to* and benefit *from* the internship. Doing your homework about the company and about your own needs will help you convince the employer that this is a good fit.

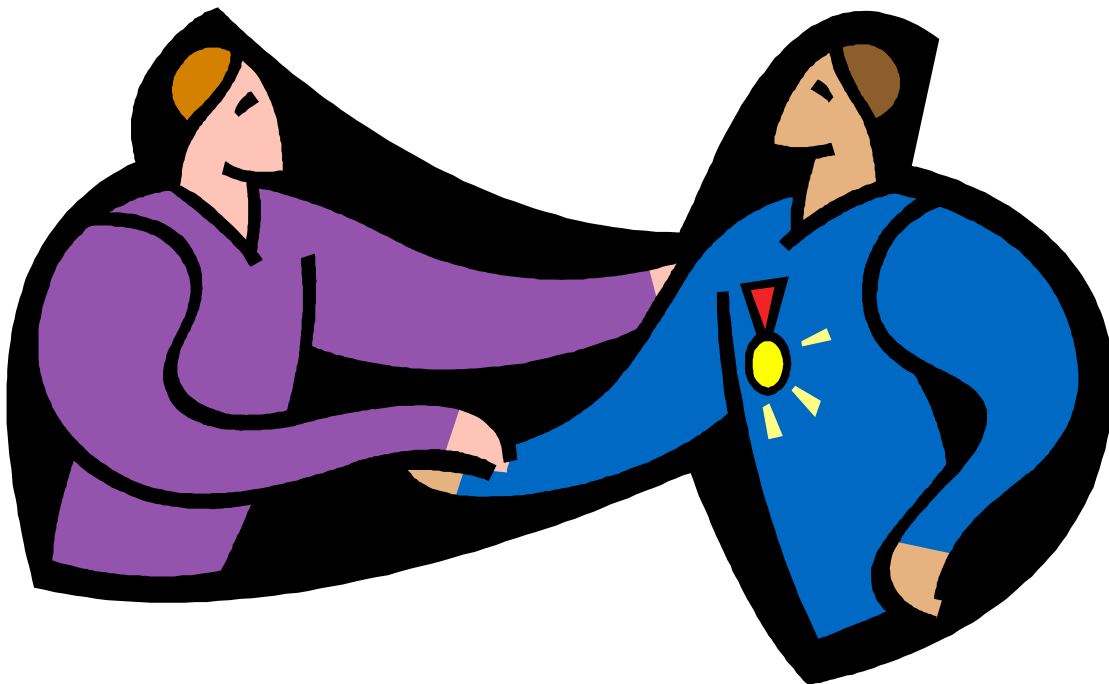
After your interview, make sure you sent a thank you email or note within 24 hours. You can find samples in the "How to Interview" booklet on the Career Development website.



Congratulations!

You got the internship! Now what?

1. **Write a thank you letter** accepting the position and stating what you understand as the starting date and ending date, wage (if any), schedule or number of hours per week or understanding that you will arrange your schedule at a later time. Include any other details about the position arrangements.
2. **If you applied for other positions**, it's a matter of courtesy to send a quick note letting the other employers know that you have accepted another position, and to thank them for their consideration. (Don't burn your bridges – you might want an internship or job there in the future!)
3. **Report** your "hire" on www.CrusaderCareers.com. It just takes a minute to update your profile page with your position and employer information.
4. **If you're planning to get credit** for the internship, contact your department faculty member in charge of internships to make arrangements.



Business Etiquette 101

“You never get a second chance to make a first impression.”

Here are some tips and several articles to help you score a great impression.

You may have had several part-time or even full time jobs on your road to your professional career, but never before has it been more important for you to be “professional” than in your first internship. The impression you make on this employer can make the difference between a job offer or great recommendation and a black mark on your new career record.

Also remember that you are representing Capital University. Employers will generalize your behavior to all Capital students, fair or not.

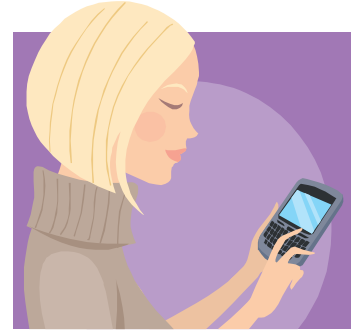
Here are some general guidelines to take into your new semi-professional life:

1. Whether you’re paid or not, stick to the agree-upon schedule. Show up on time, work the entire agreed-upon amount of time daily, weekly and for the entire semester. If you need to make changes to your schedule, discuss it with your supervisor well in advance and agree (and stick) to the new schedule.
2. Notify your internship supervisor as far in advance as possible in cases of emergency absence from work. It is never acceptable to be absent without notifying your employer in advance.
3. Do the best possible job in carrying out all assignments. Ask for clarification if you don’t understand what you’ve been asked to do.
4. Be well groomed and appropriately dressed *by your employer’s standards*. Look around and see what other employees are wearing, or ask what to wear. This might mean having to purchase a few pieces of professional clothing, borrowing from your roommate, or carrying an extra set of clothes in your car if you’re going to your internship from class or another job.
5. Be prompt, tactful, friendly, courteous, and respectful to everyone. (See articles on cell phone and email use below.)
6. Avoiding inappropriate topics may not help you make a good impression at work but it will keep you from making a bad one. Subjects that do not make for good workplace conversation include politics, religion, and health problems, gossip and other personal issues.
7. Consult the internship supervisor when confronted with problems you cannot satisfactorily solve by yourself.

Successfully completing an internship will be one of the best moves you will make on the road to career success!

Top 6 Rules for Using Cell Phones at Work

Adapted from About.com.



When you're on your own time, the choice to turn off your cell phone is entirely yours. When it comes to using your cell phone at work, however, you have to be mindful of your co-workers and your boss, not to mention your own ability to get your job done. Here are some rules you should follow if you have your cell phone at work.

1. Turn Your Cell Phone Ringer Off

If you have your cell phone at work, it shouldn't ring at all. If you don't want to turn off your cell phone completely, at least set it to vibrate. The sounds of different ring tones going off all the time can be very annoying to others. In addition, your attention should be 100% on your work, not on your private life.

2. Use Your Cell Phone Only for Important Calls/Texts

If you have your cell phone at work, you should only use it for important calls or texts. What should you classify as important? Family emergencies that you must deal with immediately are important. Replying to a text about your ride back to your apartment is important. Your friend calling to chat, your roommate texting to say the dog had an accident, or your mom calling to tell you your cousin Tilly is engaged should not be considered important. It is not appropriate to take up your employer's time to make arrangements to meet someone after work for happy hour.

3. Let Your Cell Phone Calls Go to Voice Mail

While you are at work if you are in doubt about whether an incoming call is important, let voice mail pick it up. It will take much less time to check your messages than it will to answer the call and then tell the caller you can't talk.

4. Find a Private Place to use your Cell Phone

While it's okay to use your cell phone at work for private communication during breaks, don't stay at your desk. Find somewhere else to talk or text, where your conversation can't be overheard, even if what you're discussing isn't personal. You may be on a break but your co-workers have a job to do.

5. Don't Bring Your Cell Phone Into the Restroom ... Ever

This rule should apply to using your cell phone at work or anywhere. Why? Well, if you must ask — you never know who's in there; the person on the other end of the line will hear bathroom sounds, e.g., toilets flushing; it is an invasion of your co-workers' privacy.

6. Don't Bring Your Cell Phone to Meetings

Even if you have your cell phone set to vibrate, if you receive a call or text you will be tempted to see who it's from. This is not only rude, it is a clear signal to your boss that your mind isn't 100 percent on your job. Most communication can wait until your meeting is over or until there is a break. Remember, there was a time before we had cell phones.



Tips for Professional Email

Adapted from About.com

Ninety two percent of Internet users in the United States use email. That's a huge number since 73% of those living in the U.S. use the Internet (Information Please® Database, Pearson Education, Inc., 2008). Many people use email for business communications, which stresses the importance of knowing proper email etiquette. While a lot of people understand the importance of following certain rules when writing a business letter, they often forget these rules when composing an email message. Here's a refresher:

- **Mind Your Manners:** Think of the basic rules you learned growing up, like saying "please" and "thank you." Only address someone by first name if they imply it's okay to do so. Address people as Mr., Ms., or Dr. if you don't know them personally.
- **Watch Your Tone:** The dictionary defines tone as an "accent or inflection expressive of a mood or emotion." It is very difficult to express tone in writing. ALL CAPITAL LETTERS MAKE IT LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING! You want to come across as respectful, friendly, and approachable. You don't want to sound curt or demanding.
- **Be Concise:** Get to the point of your email as quickly as possible, but don't leave out important details that will help your recipient answer your query.
- **Be Professional:** This means, stay away from abbreviations and don't use emoticons (those little smiley faces). Don't use a cute or suggestive email address for business communications.
- **Use Correct Spelling and Proper Grammar:** Use a spell checker every time. While you can write in a conversational tone (contractions are okay), pay attention to basic rules of grammar.
- **Wait to Fill in the "TO" Email Address:** Career Planning Site visitor Larry Batchelor says, "I never fill in the 'TO' email address until I am completely through proofing my email and I am sure that it is exactly the way that I want it. This will keep you from accidentally sending an email prematurely. In the past, I have accidentally clicked on the send icon, when I really meant to click on the attachment icon."

WHAT IF YOU DON'T FIND AN INTERNSHIP?

Don't be discouraged. Don't give up.

- Make an appointment with Career Development to identify reasons for your difficulty and let us help you work on those issues.
- Contact any employer who did not select you to learn why. Gently ask (never in a demanding or upset tone) what you can do to offset their reasons for rejection.
- If you found that you were late in applying for consideration this year, plan earlier to apply again next year.
- Look for other avenues to gain experience – part-time jobs, volunteer work, research, etc. We will help you.

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