



Best Practices... for student interns

before—during—following the experience

What Employers Seek in College Grads

- maturity & confidence
- good writing & speaking skills
- honesty & integrity
- leadership
- interpersonal strengths
- initiative
- creativity
- flexibility

Many of these strengths are honed through the real world experience of an internship.

Internships are a vital part of the collegiate experience. Internships will help you develop the work habits, attitudes, and skills to begin your career. They will enable you to build your network of professional contacts, explore career options, apply classroom theory and concepts, become acquainted with company culture, and make a contribution to the organization that mentors you. **Experience counts.** Get your career in motion today!

PRE-internship

Setting Goals

If you don't know where you want to go, it matters not the road you take.

If you aim for nothing you are sure to hit it.

Say it any way you want. Being purposeful about what you want to accomplish is an important first step in planning for a successful internship. Here are a few questions you might want to ask yourself to help you clearly articulate your goals.

- What do I want to achieve?
- What do I want to learn?
- What skills do I want to acquire or sharpen?
- How do I want to use my time?
- What types of tasks and projects am I eager to take on?
- What connections do I want to make?
- What questions do I want to ask?
- What input am I seeking?
- What understandings of work/working environments do I need to acquire?

As you write letters of inquiry or application to accompany your résumé be sure to include some of your goals. Employers will want to know that you are thinking about what you want to accomplish when you are with them. Some goals may be clarified and/or adjusted once an internship offer has been extended. You and your supervisor can work together on establishing learning goals to make your experience a valuable and satisfying one both before and during the experience.

The Center for Career Development is willing to help you become more specific about your internship goals, including how to make them as realistic and measureable as possible.

Other Matters. Several other aspects of pre-internship planning involve:

- Making application—preparing correspondence, developing résumés, prepping for interviews, and following-up. Accepting offers & handling rejections.
- Finding potential sites and opportunities
- Health & safety requirements—trainings, tests, clearances

***INTERNSHIP TUTORIALS are scheduled weekly.
Check with Center for Career Development for the next available date.***

Finding Opportunities...

JobCenter—there are quite a few ways to search for internships beyond the obvious **Jobs & Internships** tab. Make an appointment to learn how to use the **Employers tab, Resource Library, and Career Connections** alumni database to uncover leads.

THE CENTER FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT WEB SITE—our **Resources for Students** page (Finding Employment/ Internships section) offers several key resources, including: *Internships-USA, Opportunities in Public Affairs, Environmental Career Opportunities, ARTSEARCH, and Bridge Worldwide Music Connection.* Our *Online Services* list expands the resources available to you.

Did you know...

... you can access Internships.com directly through JobCenter?

... Internships.com sends a weekly newsletter to everyone registered with them? Get the scoop on where to look and how to make your internship a stellar experience.

... you can speak directly to employers about internships at the Capital Region Internship Fair, and the CPEC Job & Internship Fair?

DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP

Many organizations offer a formalized orientation program for their interns. These **orientations** typically include a tour of the facility and an overview of the organization's history, mission, and vision. Interns typically meet the company's key personnel and those with whom they will interact on a regular basis. Expectations for interns—explanation of duties and assignments, the reporting structure to follow, any timelines/deadlines associated with your duties, your work hours, regular supervision meetings, etc.—are often communicated in this orientation session or in initial meetings with the person assigned to supervise you.

If no formal orientation exists, do yourself a favor and ask for one. You will want to be clear as to what is expected of you from the start. Establish a regular meeting with your supervisor for **feedback on your performance and work habits.** Review your goals with your supervisor so that you can keep on track and accomplish what you intended.

Other Tips

- Keep a journal where you can reflect on your internship activities, your professional development, and what you have been learning.
- Conduct yourself professionally; be courteous.
- When in doubt, ask.
- Don't take liberties to do personal work at your internship site.
- Be mindful of company policies related to the use of the Internet, cell phones, etc.
- If there is a miscommunication in the work setting, talk with your supervisor immediately, about it so that things can quickly be resolved.
- Network; conduct informational interviews; read professional literature

WHEN IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE... OR NEARLY SO

Evaluation / Recommendations

At the end of the internship there is likely to be a final evaluation, but if you don't see one forthcoming you can always request this conversation. Ask for feedback of how well you met their expectations and developed appropriate industry-specific and liberal arts skills.

Reflection

If you've been keeping a journal you have been reflecting all along on what you've been learning and observing. But even if you have not been faithful in this activity, there is no time like the present to gather your thoughts about the challenges you've met and conquered, the goals you've set and accomplished, the new skills you've acquired, the observations you've made, the networks you've established, and the changes you've made/are making as a result of this experience.

Reflect on your **LIGHT BULB moments.** Perhaps you learned or observed something unexpected. Maybe you were able to draw a direct connection between your work and a concept learned in the classroom. Make note of these "Ah-ha" moments—they are often what keep you motivated or excited about your career development.

Expressing Appreciation

Thank everyone that assisted you with your internship. Such thoughtfulness rarely goes unnoticed. Meaningful expressions of thanks, whether hand-written or otherwise, for the time and energy someone invested in you speaks volumes. Don't delay in doing this!

Managing Your New Network

Keep in touch with those who have now become part of your network. Keep them posted on new developments with respect to your continuing education and /or job search. Let them know of your success and don't forget to inquire about and/or recognize theirs. Share interesting articles or insights on work-related topics. Invite their input into your professional development.

Learn how you can take advantage of the following opportunities by contacting the Center for Career Development.

- ⇒ LVC's **INQUIRY** celebrates student learning and offers a chance to showcase your internship experience.
- ⇒ **PennACE** (Pennsylvania Association of Colleges & Employers) \$500 Student of the Year Award recognizes three outstanding interns.
- ⇒ **Arnold Internship Grants** encourage students to broaden their horizons and pursue competitive internships.