

Internships

using experience to build career skills

What is an internship?

An internship is your opportunity to apply the knowledge you have gained from your academic studies in a practical, workplace setting. Internships may be part of a formal internship program, but students can seek out their own internships. Research and volunteer positions can both be a form of internship.

All internship experiences should provide exposure to an occupation, industry or career field, have a clear purpose/focus, and a specific project for you to complete. They can be for pay, for academic credit, or done on a volunteer basis.

Why are internships important?

- Find out what it is like to work in a specific field.
- Make connections with professionals in the field.
- Strengthen your resume. Related experience is often necessary before an employer/graduate program will consider your application.
- Jump start your full-time job search. Employers may hire their interns for full-time employment after graduation.

When do I do an internship?

It is never too early or too late to participate in an internship. Apply for an internship when you can take full advantage of the experience (but, the sooner the better). Summer is the most popular time of year to participate in an internship, as most students have more time to devote. Internships are also available during the school year and winter break. If your course load is light, you may be able to devote adequate time (e.g., 10-15 hours per week) to an internship. As a freshman or sophomore, internships should provide you with exposure to a career field or job function. As a junior or senior, an internship may also serve as a stepping stone to full-time employment.

When can you qualify for an unpaid internship?

1. Interns cannot displace regular employees.
2. Interns are not guaranteed a job at the end of the internship (though an employer may decide at the conclusion of the experience to hire them).
3. Interns are not entitled to wages during the internship.
4. Interns must receive training from the employer, even if it somewhat impedes work.
5. Interns must get hands-on experience with equipment and processes used in the industry.
6. Interns' training must primarily benefit them, not the organization.

available assistance

One-on-One Advising is available to discuss your internship search with a professional career advisor during a 30-minute appointment. Schedule through Handshake @ Illinois.

Drop-in Advising is available at Media Career Services. Stop by to get help while preparing for your internship search. Check the website for hours.

Our Website has even more information on internships and ways to search for them.
media.illinois.edu/about-us/internships

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