

GUIDE TO FINDING **INTERNSHIPS**

CAREER PLANNING SERIES

STRIVE Career Center

University Center, 1st floor across from Barnes & Noble Bookstore

8:00am – 5:00pm

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INTERNSHIPS: WINDOWS INTO THE WORLD AFTER COLLEGE

Internships fall into a larger body of work experience gained by students in their chosen profession called **Experiential Education**. Unlike most part-time jobs, these opportunities are defined by the career/degree related experience students receive while working with seasoned professionals in order to add relevant experience to academic knowledge for use in the working world.

What are Experiential Education Programs?

Experiential Education Programs are supervised pre-professional opportunities allowing students to receive experience related to their major and / or career interests. Experiential Education Programs —include academically diverse recurring opportunities labeled as:

- Internship
- Fellowship
- Apprenticeship
- Cooperative Education
- Graduate Assistant
- Teacher Assistant
- Practicum
- Student Teaching
- Research
- Experiential Education Programs are unique learning experiences as many of the following are pre-defined for the student participant:
 - Additional academic component outside of the pre-professional work experience
 - Pre-specified learning outcomes for their participants
 - Specific application deadlines, sometimes with multiple dates throughout the year
 - Located throughout the nation and internationally
 - Room for advancement within the organization
 - Opportunity to return again to complete another experience
 - Experiential education programs will have regular deadlines each year for program participants. Check with program for deadlines.
- Typically, Experiential Education Programs are available to all currently enrolled students at St. Mary's University. Opportunities are available for all classifications, from the entering freshman to the graduate student. Sometimes, these type of Experiential Education Programs are also available for the Post-Baccalaureate or Post-Graduate individual attempting to gain experience in their field after graduation.

**We will use the term INTERNSHIP for all references to
Experiential Education throughout the rest of this guide for ease of reading.**

What is an Internship?

An internship is a supervised pre-professional **LEARNING** experience, where students apply their skills and knowledge in a professional setting. This experience is directly related to a student's major or career interest and offers a preview of what work in their chosen profession will be like. By offering their time, talent and enthusiasm, interns contribute to an organization's mission and goals. For some, the experience reinforces their career decision; for others, it provides a chance to change their plotted path.

Internships are:

- Part-time or full-time
- Available in the fall, spring, summer and / or a combination

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- Paid or non-paid
- Eligible for academic credit when work content meets academic department requirements and eligibility
- May require classification and / or GPA requirements to participate
 - Only academic departments can offer course credit for an internship; therefore, students must inquire about the possibility of receiving academic credit at their department. Not all academic departments offer this option and individual departments approach the process differently. In all cases, an internship should provide a valuable learning experience to the student.
 - Academic departments may require students meet specific classification or Grade Point Average requirements to participate in an internship for academic credit. Employers may screen applicants by classification and GPA to aid in the choice of the most qualified candidate for the internship position.

THE VALUE OF AN INTERNSHIP

Internships are invaluable learning experiences for college students, and almost a necessity for any college graduate. Employers are demanding that college graduates have "real world" experience, and internships are one of the best ways for college students to gain this experience. More and more often, new hires are being drawn from the ranks of former interns whose work behavior and skills have already been put to the test. Interns who have proven themselves to a company throughout a successful on-the-job experience will be favored for full-time positions over candidates who have not completed an internship.

Regardless of your major, an internship can offer you the opportunity to:

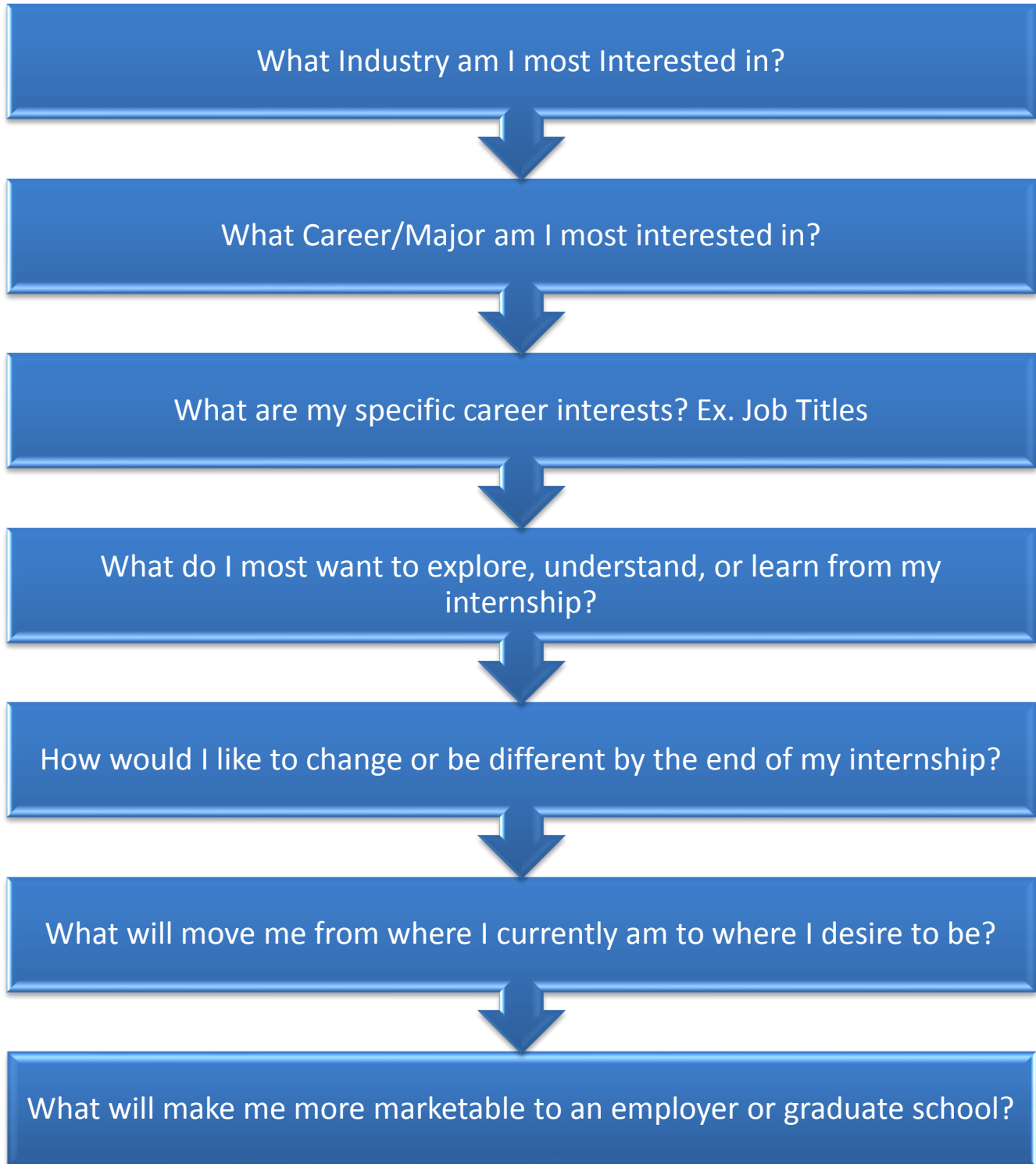
- Gain valuable experience that will give you a competitive edge in today's job market
- Explore and clarify your major and career goals with professionals in the field
- Apply theories learned in the classroom to a real world setting
- Gather insight into an industry or organizational culture
- Help smooth your transition from the classroom to the workplace
- Take responsibility for your own learning and create direct links between academic and internship work assignments
- Establish a network of professional contacts, mentors, and references that might lead to a job
- Earn money for tuition and expenses

As an intern, you will be able to develop crucial key competencies, skills and work characteristics that employers seek such as:

- Communication
- Interpersonal skills
- Teamwork
- Industry and corporate culture insight
- Confidence in your abilities
- Learning goal achievement

INTERNSHIP GOALS

Before applying to the first internship you find, make sure you have investigated all of your options. Internships vary widely in the amount of pay, whether you will be granted academic credit, the type of supervision and mentoring you receive, the length of time you are expected to work, and the amount of learning you will acquire from the experience. Before you do all that, ask yourself these questions first.



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1. Do you qualify based on your experience?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. Do you qualify based on your academic coursework/credit hours?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Note: Internships are typically aimed toward Juniors and Seniors.

- ☐ If yes, then continue to next question.
☐ If no, continue searching for an internship where you meet the requirements. You may want to seek part-time employment or long-term volunteer opportunities to build relevant experience in a related field.

3. Do you have a Resume?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Do you have a Cover Letter?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

5. Do you have References/Recommendation Letters?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered no to any questions from 2-4, please contact the STRIVE Career Center at (210) 436-3102 to set up an appointment for internship preparation.

6. Type of organization? Consider the following:

- ☐ Size of company?
 ○ Small
 ○ Large
- ☐ Corporate / Governmental / Non-profit?
 ○ Corporate: Only Employees and Interns
 ○ Governmental: Employees, Interns, and Fellows
 ○ Non-Profit: Employees, Interns, Fellows, and Volunteers
- ☐ Work environment/Culture?
 ○ Mission Statement
 ○ Values
 ○ Business Model: Private or Franchise
 ○ Philanthropy

7. Location?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Off/On Campus | ☐ City | ☐ Country |
| ☐ Local | ☐ State | ☐ Over-Seas |

Note: Take into account the cost of living within the area you are planning on doing your internship in.

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/cost-of-living-calculator>

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8. Housing?

- ☐ Dormitories
☐ Apartments/Condominiums

- ☐ With a friend/relative
☐ Host Families

- ☐ Hostels
☐ Hotels

9. Transportation?

- ☐ Need to walk
☐ Airplane
☐ Bicycle

- ☐ Car
☐ Carpool
☐ Public Transit

- ☐ Uber/Taxi/Lyft

Note: Consider if internship requires interns to frequently travel during the internship.

10. Paid or Unpaid?

- ☐ Paid (tends to result in higher-level responsibility)
- Stipend
 - Salary
 - Hourly Wage
 - Tuition Assistance
- ☐ Unpaid (May be non-profit, decide whether or not you can afford to not be paid)

11. Credit v. Non-Credit?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Note: Will be determined by your Academic Advisor or Dean's office. (*If you go to the directory on the St. Mary's website you can type in Dean and you will find the contact information needed)

12. Timeframe

- ☐ Seasonal
☐ Year round

Note: Most internships are offered over the summer.

13. Length of Internship

- ☐ Part-Time
☐ Full-Time

14. How Independent am I?

- ☐ Mentor-led (Academic Advisor, Professor, Tutor, Supervisor, and/or Mentor)
☐ Self-directed (Self-taught, no instruction or direction)

15. Do you know where to look/find for internships?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

16. Do you know how to prepare for an interview?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered no to questions 15 and 16, schedule an appointment with the STRIVE Career Center at: (210) 436-3102.

Additional Commitments

When searching for an internship, another thing to consider would be, deciding if you will be working during the timeframe/length/location of your internship, and/or taking classes. Also, think about the amount of course load, family/relationships, and any additional responsibilities that you may encounter during the timeframe of your internship. Consider how well you will be able to time-manage and don't forget about taking care of yourself!

Guide to International Internships

Spending time abroad can be rewarding and challenging. While you will be put in new situations, you will most certainly return better prepared for your future endeavors. St. Mary's students can participate in a variety of programs abroad: independent travel, academic study, language study, research, volunteer work, work-exchange programs and internships. If you are interested in academic study, language study, or research, check with your academic department for help and possible funding.

The first step in the process of finding an international internship is to think about what you'd like to get out of the experience, both personally and professionally. You need to think about your strengths and weaknesses and decide what you might be good at doing. In addition, you need to assess your own comfort level with being away from home and potentially away from modern conveniences.

Some good questions to ask yourself:

- What countries or areas of the world intrigue me?
- What kind of work would I be interested in doing?
- What skills can I bring to an employer?

Skills can include:

- Language abilities
- Communication skills
- Proficiencies in writing, research, or technology

After you have some ideas of what you're seeking, it's time to do some research! A successful international internship search will require a great deal of initiative and work on your part. You should be prepared to start early, at least six to nine months before the date you would like to start working. You can conduct your research in a number of ways. The STRIVE Career Center and the Office of International Education can serve as resources providing information on specific programs to obtain work authorization in a select number of countries, something that can be challenging to do on your own. There are often placement fees associated with recommended programs and they can vary widely with some opportunities for scholarships.

Outside of an established program, you can also obtain an internship directly with an organization. Generally, these fall into a couple of categories: government agencies (such as the U.S. Department of State or U.S.A.I.D.), non-governmental organizations (such as the World Bank or the United Nations), and international corporations. If you know of a specific company or organization you are interested in conducting an internship with, do some research on their web site to see if they offer an internship program. Internships with governmental and non-governmental agencies are extremely competitive and are often unpaid. They also have application deadlines in the fall for the following summer.

Work Visas and Other Considerations

One of the biggest and most time-consuming challenges of interning abroad is completing the paperwork necessary for you to live and work in another country. One of the first things you should do is make sure you have an updated passport. It can take 6-8 weeks for a new passport and almost as long to renew an old one, so plan ahead.

Many countries will allow entrance to American citizen visitors for a maximum of three months. However, if you wish to earn money during this time, or plan on staying longer than three months, a visa may be necessary. Getting the correct information about the paperwork you need to work abroad legally will require some research. You can contact the company that has made you an offer. If you are going

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through an established program for your internship or volunteer placement, ask them for assistance. Finally, be sure to contact the appropriate embassy or consulate for information. When you contact local consulates, also ask about any travel warnings, or health requirements, such as immunization. Speak to the Student Health Center about immunizations.

The following links will be useful for finding the information you'll need:

www.embassy.org
travel.state.gov

If you are an international student, you will have to contact your nation's consulate to learn about any authorized paperwork you will need to travel in and out of the United States.

INTERNSHIP TIMELINE

It's never too early to start planning for your internship. The total process—finding an internship and applying and interviewing for it—can take several months. Also, note that some deadlines are very early! Beginning early allows you to more evenly balance the time required to conduct a successful search with other demands on your time. Whatever the time of year, starting now is better than tomorrow!

Here is a “general” timeline to assist you with the planning process:

COMPLETE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OR UP TO THREE SEMESTERS BEFORE YOU WANT TO START YOUR INTERNSHIP...

- Talk with your STRIVE Career Center Counselor, Academic Advisor and Professors to find out what internship resources are available to you.
- Decide what you would like from your internship. Responsibilities? Compensation? Experience? Full-time? Part-Time? A few hours per week?
- Define where you would like to do your internship. City? Corporation? Industry? Hometown? In-State? Out-of-State?
- Assess what skills you have that you can apply in an internship and determine what skills you want to develop as a result of an internship.
- Create and review your Internship Learning Goals
- Write your resume and cover letter. You may include a proposal of your internship learning goals in your cover letter.
- Attend job fairs to find out about internship opportunities and how and when to pursue them.
- Start networking with everyone you know.
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals in the field. These people can give you a more accurate understanding of the field and how your learning goals fit in.
- Start researching internship opportunities. Obtain general information about companies, internship programs, contact people and abide by deadlines.

COMPLETE AT LEAST TWO SEMESTERS BEFORE YOUR INTERNSHIP...

- Send out your resume and cover letter to organizations in your chosen profession conducting the type of work you would like to learn how to do.
- Practice your interviewing skills. Schedule a mock interview with your Civic Engagement and Career Development Career Advisor.

COMPLETE AT LEAST ONE SEMESTER BEFORE YOUR INTERNSHIP...

- Make sure your application is complete for each company where you would like to intern.

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- Interview with employers.
- Send thank-you letters to employers who gave you an opportunity to interview.
- Decide on an internship that is best for you, and accept an internship offer.

WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERNSHIP

In addition, students are encouraged to register with the RattlerCareers job and internship website at <https://www.stmarytx.edu/campuslife/career-services/>. Registration consists of completing a personal profile and uploading of relevant career documents: resume, cover letter, and references. By registering your profile on RattlerCareers, you will receive email notifications concerning job / internship postings and On-Campus Interview schedules that match your major as well as career related event notifications.

All STRIVE Career Center counselors are available to provide assistance in researching specific internship opportunities, preparing your resume, practicing interview skills, and for other questions or concerns. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor and call (210) 436-3102 or email strivecareer@stmarytx.edu to get more information.

NETWORKING AND INFORMATION INTERVIEWING

The number one method of job-hunting also works for getting internships - **networking**. Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a specific type of internship; these people should include your family, your friends (at school and at home), your family's friends, your professors, past employers, alumni, etc. Just as with job-hunting, networking may be one of your best sources for internships -- especially for competitive internships.

Another useful method is to gather information about a given field, a specific position, or a particular company by talking to people directly through **informational interviewing**. The benefits of Informational Interviewing are numerous:

- Gather information and identify opportunities that you can't get from reading a company brochure
- People working in the field can provide the most up-to-date information on how people get started, what employers are looking for, career paths, corporate culture, and industry trends.
- You may pick up valuable tips such as which organizations are hiring or what professional associations people in that field belong to.

Another way to network is through www.linkedin.com. Here you will find current alumni and see where they live, where they work, what they do, what they studied, what they are skilled at, and how you are connected. You will find this information if you go to the St. Mary's LinkedIn page and click on alumni. This can help you if you are searching for an internship and/or job. You can get connected with alumni and ask to shadow them, or to give you more insight into the company and how to go about applying if interested.

CONTACT TARGET EMPLOYERS

Through your research you may identify a company that does what you want to be doing but doesn't at first appear to be looking for an intern.

It is in your best interest to contact that company directly and ASK.

How to Ask:

- Give them a call
- Send an email

- Write a letter

What to Ask:

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- Ask if they hire interns
- Have hired interns in the past
- If they might be thinking about hiring an intern

They may not be advertising until next month, or their internship positions are currently filled but an opportunity may open up at a later date. If they hadn't considered using an intern your inquiry might plant the idea in their minds.

For many students, the idea of approaching a company and "creating" a position for yourself can be very intimidating. Keep in mind that companies benefit from hiring interns in many ways.

CREATE A PROPOSAL

Don't be afraid to approach employers with a proposal. What you are offering them is a valuable commodity. At the same time, do be prepared for a company to not be interested in what you have to offer. It may be that they simply don't have need of your services at this time. Don't let this discourage you and don't take it personally. Just put together the best proposal you can and keep searching until the right opportunity presents itself.

Just because a company does not have an internship program or any current internship openings does not mean that you can't approach them. Based on the information you gathered during your research, prepare a proposal for the work you would like to do as an intern. The proposal might be for a specific project you know (from your research) that the organization needs done, or it could be for a particular position you know (from your research) that the employer is likely to have. Most employers are too busy for people who will "do anything" so be as specific as possible. In addition, if you are willing to "do anything" then save yourself some work and go do it for a company with an existing internship position.

There is no prescribed format for your proposal, but a letter (or sometimes an email is also a good idea) written specifically for each employer is a good place to start. Think of this as a Cover Letter for your Resume.

Your Internship Proposal should:

- Include a clear and concise description of what it is you are offering to do for the company and why you think they need you to do it
- Be specific about the project you want to work on or position you wish to fill
- Highlight why **you** are the right person to do this for the company
- Include your dates of availability and whether you are looking for a full-time or a part-time position
- Indicate that you are seeking a paid (or non-paid) position

Your proposal should include a resume that illustrates the strengths you are offering. In your resume, your academic experiences, participation in student groups, research experience, extra-curricular activities, and part-time job experiences will translate into marketable skills such as, time management, communication, teamwork, and analytical skills. Make sure you take the time to prepare your materials carefully so that it's clear that you are offering something of value. A well-crafted resume will highlight the skills you possess that the company is looking for.

Example of Internship Proposal

Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Today's Date

Employer's Full Name
Employer's Title
Department
Name of Company
Street Address of PO Box
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

My name is _____ and I am a junior at St. Mary's University majoring in Marketing in search of internship experience in Event Planning and Public Relations. I have researched your company and have found that you were ranked as the #1 Public Relations firm in San Antonio for 2020 and have held that position in the market for 6 years running. Congratulations on your success! Margo Danner considers you to be the finest event planner she has worked with for event planning and suggested that I contact you for information on how to pursue an internship with your firm.

I am the social chair of my sorority and have held programming officer positions in two high profile organizations on St. Mary's University campus. Recently, I was asked to take part in university alumni event planning and marketing to attract further alumni involvement with the university. I also have project experience with courses in marketing, public relations and media writing. I would like to pursue an internship with your firm to strengthen my skills in the following areas:

- Executive Event Planning and Management
- Creating and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns for Not-for-profit and Corporate Clients

Enclosed is my resume detailing my current event planning and public relations experiences. I am looking forward to providing you transcripts and professional references that can attest to my dedication and enthusiasm for the field. Because I know you are very busy at this period of time, I will contact you (_____ within one week of date of letter) to find an appropriate time to discuss possible internships. If you are able to, I am available to schedule an information interview next week in the afternoon. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,
(Don't forget to sign your name!)

Type your name here

WHERE TO SEND THE PROPOSAL

Be sure that your proposal gets to the person who has the power to hire you. The Human Resource department is often a good place to start asking questions but also ask for referrals to managers or supervisors in the department in which you want to work. These are the people who might have a better idea of the company's staffing needs and who can actually offer you a position. Organizational charts, websites, and company literature can help you find the name of these people or ask your networking contacts if they have any suggestions. Telephone receptionists and department secretaries can help too. It is better to invest the time into a few phone calls than to send a letter to the "Director of Personnel" or "To Whom it May Concern."

FOLLOW UP

Follow up with a phone call or an email within a few days to a week after submitting your proposal. Students sometimes feel it's pushy or desperate to make such a call or that they are bothering the employer. There is a difference between being pushy or desperate and being assertive in an internship search. Being assertive in your internship search requires you to be polite in your follow up as this is expected and it reinforces your interest and commitment. You just need to project confidence and be concise in your communications. Everyone in the working world understands the need for persistence.

IN THE END...

You'll notice that there really is no direct path to all internship positions. The key is to take some time so that you give yourself the best chance of success. Don't be discouraged if you can't find a position that is readily available. An internship experience that you've created to be specifically tailored to your academic and career interests will be far more rewarding than a position you settled for because it was all you could find.

FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE

DO'S:

- **Do** try and obtain at least one internship during your college years. And **do** try to get multiple internships.
- **Do** set specific goals for yourself and each internship. Know what you want to accomplish with each internship.
- **Do** expect to be treated professionally. And **do** act professionally at all times.
- **Do** utilize your network of family and friends to the fullest to get leads on internships.
- **Do** try and schedule regular meetings with your internship supervisor.
- **Do** get as much exposure throughout the internship organization as possible.
- **Do** find a mentor within the organization, whether it's your internship supervisor or some other manager.
- **Do** make sure you leave your internship with new skills, a better understanding of your field, and tangible accomplishments.
- **Do** take advantage of job and career fairs to scout possible internship opportunities.
- **Do** be sure you have a dynamic cover letter, a superior resume, and polished interviewing techniques.
- **Do** send thank you letters to all people who interview you -- and all the people who help you find an internship.
- **Do** enjoy your internship -- even when you are doing the inevitable grunt work many interns do as part of "paying your dues."
- **Do** keep in touch with key co-workers from your internships -- and do cultivate them to become part of your network.

DON'Ts:

- **Don't** expect internships to just be handed to you; internships must be earned, as with any job.
- **Don't** expect all internships to be paid. We wish they all were, but many are not. And **do** at least consider accepting both paid and non-paid internships; some of the best internships may not be paid.
- **Don't** pass up opportunities to have experiences beyond the regular scope of the internship that lead to chances to learn more about the company or industry.
- **Don't** forget to take advantage of the Civic Engagement and Career Development Center -- we have leads to numerous internship opportunities.
- **Don't** ever give up in your internship quest. And **do** exhaust all possible internship leads.
- **Don't** be afraid to ask questions. And **do** be open to learning new skills and methodologies.
- **Don't** burn any bridges -- even if your internship was not the best.

INTERNSHIP WEBSITES

- www.LinkedIn.com
- www.Indeed.com
- www.Glassdoor.com
- <http://www.monster.com/>
- RattlerCareers (How to access: Gateway > Services > Student Services > Career Services > Rattler Careers on related links)
- <http://www.globalexperiences.com/>
- www.Internships.com
- <http://www.coolworks.com/>
- <https://my.usajobs.gov/>
- www.Worldinternships.org
- <http://www.idealists.org/>
- <https://www.internmatch.com/>
- <http://www.youtern.com/>
- www.internshipprograms.com
- www.CollegeGrad.com
- <http://online.wsj.com/>
- www.Experience.com
- wwwSimplyhired.com
- www.GettingHired.com
- www.PathwaystoScience.org
- www.twc.edu
- www.si.edu/ofg/internopp.htm
- www.internweb.com
- www.internjobs.com
- www.Google.com

Note - These are only a few internship websites, there are more and may require more research on your part! ☺