



Make the Most of Internships

Overview

Internships vary in the amount and type of responsibility, number of hours, and amount of supervision. No matter what your internship situation, it can provide a great opportunity for you to learn new skills, gain exposure to different work environments, and identify potential job roles and career paths.

Internship Tips

Set goals about what you want to accomplish. Know what you want to get out of the internship experience.

Know how you'll be compensated. Is the internship paid or unpaid / for academic credit only? If the position is for academic credit, you'll need to enroll in an internship course like ESS 197: Independent Study. Learn more at www.ess.uci.edu/independstudy.

Determine how much time you will commit. How many hours can you work each week, and how long will the internship last? Make sure not to over-commit. Leave time for academics. Twenty five hours per quarter is equal to one unit of academic credit in ESS 197: Independent Study.

Create a learning agreement. Meet with your supervisor and discuss each other's expectations for the internship before you begin. You do not need to make a formal document, but you should clarify your tasks and assignments, work schedule, dress code, office rules and procedures, etc.

Be professional. As an intern (paid or unpaid), you are a representative of the organization. Work hard to make a good impression. Be punctual and proactive. You are not only gaining work experience but also developing a professional network that can help you as you enter the work force and develop your personal career path.

Ask questions! If you aren't sure how to perform a task, use a program, or complete an assignment - ask! An internship is meant to be learning experience. Be open to new ideas and procedures. Remember that you aren't expected to know everything right away. Asking questions demonstrates your interest in the position, company, and industry.

Take initiative. If you complete your regular tasks, ask what else you can help with or take on.

Have a positive attitude. Every internship includes menial tasks. Don't complain. Make the most of it by doing your best on every task your assigned.

Meet or talk with your supervisor on a regular basis. Make sure your supervisor is up-to-date on your assignment progress. Seek constructive feedback on your work.

Schedule informational interviews. Take advantage of being "inside" a company, and schedule informational interviews with employees in different job roles.

Save samples of your work for your portfolio. Make sure to ask your supervisor if saving copies of your work is in compliance with the company's policies.

Write thank you notes. After you've completed your internship, write thank you notes to your supervisor and other colleagues who helped make the experience a good one. Again, you are not only gaining work experience but also developing a professional network that can help you as you enter the work force and develop your personal career path.

Information taken from www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/jobsandinternships/makingmostofinternship.php